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SOCIAL PROBLEMS AND POLICY
DURING THE PURITAN REVOLUTION
1640-1660

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POLICY DURING
THE PURITAN REVOLUTION
1640-1660 .

BY

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE

IN the following pages an attempt has been made to describe some aspects of social and economic development, and the corresponding changes in social and economic thought, which took place between the years 1640 and 1660. Attention has been concentrated mainly upon social thought and policy, and economic organization has been discussed only in so far as has been necessary to throw light upon this side of the subject.

It is not always recognized that the discredit of the Stuart monarchy and the Commonwealth experiment marked the beginning of a new epoch in social, no less than in political, history. The most obvious fact which emerges from a study of the economic history of the time is that of widespread disorganization and depression in industry and agriculture, and a consequent increase of poverty and unemployment. The reaction of contemporary thought and policy to this environment is unusually interesting and significant. Traditional authority in church and state was weakened, and to a large extent overthrown, and powerful forces were released which had hitherto been denied the opportunity of free development.

The first chapter indicates, by way of introduction, some of the forces which were at work to change traditional conceptions of social expediency, and which, in many cases, came to a head during the Interregnum. As this part of the subject has been treated by other writers, secondary authorities have been freely used, especially in the earlier sections of the chapter. The succeeding chapters discuss in some detail problems connected with industry, agriculture, and poor relief, and in the last chapter a sketch of general social projects has been given. The abundance of material has made it necessary to limit the scope of the work, and, except for incidental references, finance and foreign trade have been deliberately omitted.

A list of the sources which have been used is given below. The manuscripts in the Guildhall Record Office and in the archives of the City Companies have proved especially

valuable. In this connection I wish to thank Mr. A. H. Thomas, Clerk of the Records, City of London, who has helped me in many ways. My thanks are also due to the following Companies for allowing me to examine some of their records: the Goldsmiths, the Clothworkers, the Merchant Taylors, the Saddlers, the Weavers, the Carpenters, the Pewterers, the Leathersellers, and the Cutlers.

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To Mr. R. H. Tawney, under whose direction I worked for three years, I owe a debt which it is impossible to express.

MARGARET JAMES.

March, 1930.

CHAPTER I

THE INFLUENCE OF RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

"None more fond of a King than the English, yet they departed from Him to ease their purses and their Consciences."

Peter Chamberlen, *The Poor Man's Advocate*, 1649.

"Faith is a successful grace, and hath a promise of prospering."

Matthew Wren, *Monarchy Asserted*, 1660.

"They have cast all the mysteries and secrets of government before the vulgar, and taught the soldiery and the people to look into them and ravel back all governments to the first principles of nature."

Clement Walker, *History of Independency*, 1661.

(I) PURITAN OPPOSITION TO THE OLD RÉGIME

THE twenty years between 1640 and 1660 are often regarded merely as an interruption in the main stream of social and economic development, and the transition from the government of Laud and Strafford to an England dominated by Shaftesbury and Pepys and Nell Gwynne is effected without much attempt at explanation. Yet during the Civil Wars and Commonwealth a lasting change took place in the theory of social relationships. With King Charles's head fell the last remnants of the mediaeval ideal of divinely appointed authority which had arisen from the flames of the Reformation in the form of the Divine Right of Kings. This theory was important from a social as well as from a political point of view, and, though the main conflict took place in the political sphere, it was urged forward by the force of a widespread discontent with the Government's conceptions of social expediency.

One of the pleasant myths which help to give us a feeling of superiority towards the rest of Europe is the belief that Englishmen have never submitted to any considerable measure of Government interference in matters of business or private life. We all know that Laud cut off men's ears because they would not bow the knee to Rome, and that Charles imprisoned those who would not submit to illegal taxation, but the knowledge that these acts were the worst side of a comprehensive, if badly administered, system of

paternal control is not widespread. Miss Leonard has said of the Eleven Years' Tyranny that it was "remarkable for more continuous efforts to enforce socialistic measures than have been made by the central Government of any other great European country".¹ This statement is exaggerated, for Charles and his advisers were often influenced by financial considerations and religious bigotry, which they attempted to hide beneath a cloak of regal benevolence; and even when their intentions were good their practice was lax and inefficient. But beneath the Government's slackness and greed it is possible to discover the view of society which is described in one of Laud's sermons. "For if any be so addicted to his private, that he neglect the common State," said the Archbishop, "he is void of the sense of piety, and wisheth peace and happiness to himself in vain."²

When applied to economic and social life, this view was interpreted to mean Government interference in every transaction where it was possible for private interest to run counter to the general good. Wages, prices, exchanges, and the general conduct of industry and agriculture were submitted to frequent criticism and control. The cloth industry was a particular object of concern, partly because of its national importance and partly because it was organized upon lines which gave unusual power to the capitalist. In 1621, when the master clothiers wanted to lock out their workmen during a period of depression, the Council directed the justices to order them to keep the men in employment.³ On one occasion, the Sudbury weavers complained that the wages of the spinners, weavers and combers had been reduced by the clothiers for their own profit. The Council referred this case to a committee, who were to see that the usual wages were paid, and, if any individual continued to allow his "private end or humor" to interfere with the commissioners' orders, he was to be called up before them and made to answer for his sins.⁴ Another type of business man who fared badly under Charles I was the corn engrosser. In 1630, a certain Archer was brought before the Star Chamber on the charge of engrossing and enhancing the price of corn, an offence which Mr. Attorney declared to be "of evill consequence, and to the undoing of the poore and *malum in se*". Archer was convicted and committed to the Fleet.⁵ Agriculture, no less than industry and commerce, was subjected to Government interference, and the course of the enclosure movement was temporarily retarded by the

action of the commissions which were appointed in 1632, 1635 and 1636.⁶ Perhaps the most consistent application of paternal control took place in the department of the Poor Law, which was more thoroughly administered during the period from 1629-40 than at any other time.⁷

Strafford is the minister most closely connected with Charles I's policy in its social and political bearings. He was both uncompromising and incorruptible, and, unlike his master, a statesman of great practical ability. When he first went to the North, he laid down the principles on which government should be based. "Princes are to be indulgent, nursing fathers to their people, their modest liberties, their sober rights ought to be precious in their eyes. . . . Subjects on the other side ought with solicitous eyes of jealousy to watch over the prerogatives of a Crown, the authority of a King is the keystone which closeth up the arch of order and government, which contains each part in due relation to the whole."⁸ Strafford proceeded to translate his theories into practice with a thoroughness which has rarely been paralleled. He administered the Poor Law vigorously, and in 1631 set up a permanent Royal Commission to supervise poor relief. Despite the clothiers' resentment, he enforced the clothing regulations and brought about a general improvement in the trade. Money and influence meant nothing to him, and in dealing with a dispute between Vermuyden and the commoners of Hatfield Chase, he took the side of the latter. It was not unnatural that men of property should resent bitterly his complete disregard of their interests, and, since this resentment could not be openly expressed, they brought unfounded charges of corruption against him.⁹

Strafford furthered the cause of personal government both honestly and efficiently, but the same could not be said of all those who helped Charles to drive his kingdom to rebellion. The attempt to control industry by granting monopolies was almost completely disastrous. Though, in some cases, there was a genuine desire to help a struggling trade or group of craftsmen, the grant was too often made to a needy or ambitious courtier by an equally needy Government. This misuse of prerogative power had not even the virtue of success, for, commonly, not only did the quality of the monopolized commodity go down and the price go up, but the King seldom reaped the profit from his grant.¹⁰ Those who opposed the whole system of paternal government had little difficulty in persuading themselves that it was always

corrupt as well as mistaken, and Strafford and Laud, whose fault was that they thought too much of principle and too little of expediency, were put in the same category as Court favourites who had no principle at all except their own advancement.

While Charles's secular advisers tried to govern men's bodies, Laud attempted the harder task of regulating their souls, and, in doing so, he consolidated the very features of Anglicanism which seemed most loathsome to the Puritans. To him, the form was more than the spirit, and he sincerely believed that true religious feeling could be expressed only through the medium of well-defined ceremonies. Cromwell's sudden bursts of exaltation and his dark, gloomy periods of contrition, or Fox's mysticism, expressing itself in wildly unorthodox practices, would have seemed to Laud to savour more of Hell than of Heaven. The chief instruments which he used to enforce his ideal of decency and order were the Court of High Commission and the Metropolitan Visitation. The latter was a device of his own, by which he was able to visit every parish in the province of Canterbury and enforce the rules which he had laid down. The High Commission was a much more adaptable weapon and aroused much wider indignation. Though it had been originally created to deal with ecclesiastical cases, under Laud's direction it interfered widely in secular affairs. Offenders of all kinds, including pamphleteers, lecturers and printers, were treated to a summary jurisdiction unlike that of the ordinary lay courts. For example, a certain G. Long and his companions were brought before the Court to answer for a whole catalogue of sins, which included embezzling the poor's money, hindering the repair of the church and scoffing at preachers.¹¹ Printers were rebuked for bad work in these words: "The Archbishop of Canterbury saith that the Printers which print for his Majesty have a very profitable place, and therefore should be more carefull." Heretofore printers had done their work well, "but these looke to gaine, gaine gaine, nothing els. . . . Well, let them looke to it . . ."¹²

Regarded from a purely religious point of view, Laud's rule was hard to bear, and it was fiercely resented by zealous Puritans, of whom many thousands left England for the New World. But, as Gardiner says: "taken by itself, the dissatisfaction of thoughtful and religious men would not have produced a Revolution."¹³ It was because religion encroached on every department of life that ordinary men

flung off their old allegiances. When Laud forbade private families to keep a chaplain, he outraged their love of independence as much as their religious convictions. The storm of indignation which raged round the pillory at which Prynne, Burton and Bastwick stood in 1637 was aroused less by Puritan disapproval of the bishops whom they had attacked, than by this striking example of a well-organized system of ecclesiastical interference with individual freedom.

Yet when all allowances have been made, the "Puritan Revolution" still remains a good description of the revolt of 1640, for, though secular interests and irreligious men were largely concerned in it, the root cause of their opposition was religious. It has been said that, while the Divine Right of Kings was the child of the Reformation, democracy was its residuary legatee. Though the scene of reformation and the personality of the reformers introduced considerable modifications, the core of the movement was a revolt of the individual conscience and intellect against authority interposed between man and God. Insistence on the supreme importance of the individual is nearly always implicit, and sometimes explicit in the reformers' teaching. In the *Babylonish Captivity*, Luther declares that no Christian should be ruled except by his own consent, and Calvin thought that obedience to the state should be withheld when to obey was to disregard God's will. A more powerful lever against autocracy lay in the manifold developments of the Reformation doctrines, and in the subjects' refusal to submit to the dictates of a kingly conscience with which they disagreed. Figgis says that "political liberty as a fact in the modern world is the result of the struggle of religious organisms to live".¹⁴ The continual attempts which men made to arrive at a more perfect form of some aspect of Reformation teaching gave rise to that diverse body who are known as Puritans. In Elizabethan England, it was Independency which aroused most alarm among statesmen and bishops, and, as time went on, the most tolerant of rulers grew alarmed, and began to question the wisdom of her own axiom that it was unnecessary to have windows into men's souls.¹⁵ Under pressure of growing persecution, large numbers of Independents emigrated to Holland, and after absorbing yet more revolutionary ideas, departed in the *Mayflower* to put their theories into practice in the New World. From there they exercised an important influence on the growth of democratic opinion in England.

Though one stream of Reformation teaching flowed in the direction of individualism and democracy, the other turned the wheel of governmental authority with renewed vigour. The first effect of the reformers' doctrines was to substitute a new presbyter for the old priest, and, while Luther invested the State with the sanctity of a Church, Calvin endowed the Church with the attributes of a State. By exalting the civil power, Luther unwittingly prepared the way for the modern secular conception of authority. Whereas in the Middle Ages the Prince had been "divinely tolerated", he was now described by Melancthon as the most noble thing on earth.¹⁶ Luther put forward a plan by which the Papal power in the state was to be completely destroyed and a national ecclesiastical council was to take its place. The civil authorities were to take over a large part of the social and economic jurisdiction which had belonged to the Church, for Luther insisted that all cases involving money, estates or any material interest were the proper business of the secular power. Apart from his direct teaching, his dislike of the monastic ideal and exaltation of the civic and domestic virtues contributed to the rise of secular supremacy. But, though the modern secular state owes many of its attributes to Reformation teaching, it must share with democracy the position of residuary legatee, for, in the years immediately following the Reformation, politics became more and not less religious, and the Divine Right of Kings rose to combat Papal pretensions.

The ends at which Luther and Calvin aimed were very similar, but the means which they employed were strikingly different. Calvin's government in Geneva was a theocracy, in which all human activities and aspirations were subordinated to a single ideal. Theoretically, the citizens were organized both as a State and as a Church, but in practice the religious element preponderated. Every detail of social life was closely regulated. Marriage without the Church's sanction was impossible, and jewellery, long hair, bright colours and new fashions were forbidden on pain of fines and public humiliation. In short, Calvin for a time succeeded in making of the Church what Mussolini would like to make of the State. Much significance has been attributed to Calvin's refusal to lay down a cut and dried prohibition of usury, but, when the general character of his social organization is taken into account, it seems obvious that laxity was the last sin of which he was guilty, and that he fully expected

Church and State to work together in enforcing some rigorous system of financial control. Calvinistic organization and beliefs took firm root in Scotland during the latter half of the sixteenth century, and began to filter through into England during Elizabeth's reign in the form of isolated *classes*. When the outbreak of Civil War entailed a military and political alliance with Scotland, zealous Presbyterians of both nations hoped to introduce their religious system wholesale into this country.

England was a difficult place in which to introduce a logical, ready-made system. Seventeenth century English Puritanism was neither Calvinism nor Independency. It contained elements of both, and was rather an attitude of mind and a way of life than a fixed and definite doctrine. Mrs. Hutchinson complained that "Puritan" was an indiscriminate term of abuse for anyone who stood up against the practices of the Court party. "If any gentleman . . . maintained the good laws of the land, or stood up for any public interest," she wrote, "he was a Puritan."¹⁷ But in certain matters Puritans presented a united front. While many Anglicans distrusted an unchecked, individual examination of the Bible, the Puritans believed that every man and woman should have free access to what they held to be the only fount of inspiration. The various forms and ceremonies which had become part of the Church's services seemed to them empty and meaningless, and it was true that in many parts of England the wearing of a surplice and the gabbling of an incomprehensible Latin prayer were supposed to constitute a satisfactory morning's service. Zealous Puritans hungered for a well-instructed, preaching ministry, who would be strong enough to influence their congregations without the help of music and vestments, but since this was impossible on any large scale prior to 1640, they contented themselves with family prayers and Bible readings, and sometimes kept a minister in their own homes. Another general characteristic which the Puritans shared was that, within certain limits, their conception of morality was extremely strict. James I's Court had been unusually licentious, and it was probably at this time that the Puritans developed their almost fanatical hatred of drunkenness, swearing and profligacy. They cultivated a deliberately unfashionable style of dress, cut their hair short and in their speech made much use of Biblical phrases, hoping in this way to avoid the lures of the flesh. Their attitude towards the keeping of

Sunday grew increasingly dogmatic, till at last it became one of their chief points of difference with Laud.

Puritanism was widely diffused and was not peculiar to any one class or locality. Country gentlemen like Hampden and Hutchinson stood at one end of the scale, and town-dwelling artisans and servants like those described in Edwards' *Gangraena* at the other. But it was among the "middle sort of men", and especially among the trading classes of the towns, that Puritanism struck its deepest roots. Statistical evidence has shown that, during the first years of the seventeenth century, Puritan ministers were congregated mainly in the industrial parts of the country.¹⁸ In the keen searchlight thrown over England by the outbreak of the Civil Wars, it became evident that Puritanism was strongest among the trading classes. London, the city of merchants and craftsmen, threw in its lot wholeheartedly with the Parliament, and continued after the Restoration to be the stronghold of Dissent. Throughout the country, the growing industrial towns supported the Parliamentary cause, even when, as in Lancashire, the neighbouring country had declared for Charles. Leading Puritans admitted the connection between a "middle" economic and social status and a Puritan frame of mind. "Freeholders and Tradesmen," said Baxter, "are the Strength of Religion and Civility in the Land; and Gentlemen and Beggars and Servile Tenants are the Strength of Iniquity . . ." ¹⁹ Thus, Puritanism was strongest among the very men who, for economic reasons, already objected to the implications of monarchical and Anglican rule,²⁰ and it is not hard to imagine how spiritual conviction and economic interest would react upon and reinforce one another.

The reasons for this connection between Puritanism and the middle trading classes are not easy to discover or define. It seems probable that the Puritan faith, with its insistence on the importance of the individual and on the expression of faith through sober, consistent industry, found a natural home among those classes in seventeenth century England who were engaged in economic enterprise, and who disliked at once the frivolity and corruption of the Court and the stringency of Laud and Strafford.²¹ The connection thus formed resulted in benefits both for Puritanism and for the middle, trading classes. Puritanism gained the support of an already powerful section of society, and, in its turn, conferred

on the secular activities of its ally a blessing and sanctification which they had hitherto lacked.

Before the Civil Wars, Puritanism was made up of conflicting elements which flew apart only after they had overthrown their common foe. In 1640, Independents and Presbyterians joined with Laodiceans and sinners to attack a system of government which they all hated. It was evident that the attack on episcopacy was launched by men who were concerned as much with the bishop's interference in secular affairs as with their ecclesiastical policy. One of the Articles brought against Laud dwelt upon the far-reaching effects of his arbitrary rule. It was stated that the advice which he gave the King was of a kind likely to overthrow the fundamental constitution of the kingdom, for, on being told that a certain course was illegal, he replied that he would make it law, since "the King might at his own pleasure take what he pleased without Law, because warranted by God's Law".²² Nor did the Archbishop hesitate to put his theories into practice, for, when sitting on enclosure commissions, he rode roughshod over the rights of private property as defined by the common law.²³ Speaking against bishops in general, a writer of 1641 declared that their combination of functions was confusing and distasteful. Sometimes they were found in a court of justice, sometimes in a pulpit, "in the first so much against God's Will, in the second so much against his own will, that as he hath not a right to the one, he prizeth not a Right to the other."²⁴ Popular indignation expressed itself through the medium of verses, in which bishops were coupled with monopolists as the country's worst enemies:—

"Where be yr proud Priests that straddle so wide,
As if they did meane the moone to bestride,
To tread on ye Nobles, and trample them downe,
To set up the mitre above the King's Crowne,
That ere he was Clark ye priest hath forgott,
But pride will come downe, Gramercy good Scott."²⁵

More definite complaints of the economic and social effects of the bishops' rule were made in a petition to the House of Commons. The petitioners complained that trade had suffered through the too frequent observance of holidays and Saints' Days. Yet more serious were the effects of the bishops' religious intolerance. Many of the kingdom's most profitable subjects, especially clothiers and merchants, had left the country in search of religious freedom,

transplanting their industries to Holland and other lands. As a consequence, the woollen trade had appreciably decayed, workmen were thrown out of employment, and the whole country was impoverished.²⁶

At first, both country and Parliament seemed to be united in condemning episcopacy, but Sir Simon D'Ewes was acute enough to see that the harmony which prevailed was only superficial. He distinguished between that aspect of episcopacy which involved "vaine aeriall titles of Lordshipp, the spoiles of the Crowne with which they are loaden, and ther vast and tyrannicall power which they exercise", and those spiritual functions which had existed for centuries, and against which he had no wish to protest.²⁷ So far as the "vast and tyrannicall power" of the bishops was concerned, Parliament was in agreement, and in 1640 it passed an ordinance preventing persons in Holy Orders from exercising temporal power. The ordinance stated that "it is found by long experience that their intermeddling with secular jurisdictions hath occasioned great mischiefs and scandal both to Church and State".²⁸ Finally, with the abolition of the administrative courts, the machinery through which Laud had been enabled to enforce his policy was destroyed.

(II) INDIVIDUALISM *versus* COLLECTIVISM

The Puritans were now faced with the necessity of filling the void which they had created. The house was swept and garnished, and during the next twenty years a conflict raged between the divergent interests and ideals which were now free to vindicate their right to supremacy. But victory was not determined solely by the innate virtue or strength of the conflicting forces. The material and intellectual environment which they attempted to control did not accept their teaching wholesale, but selected those parts which were most congenial to its own temper. In his *History of Rationalism*, Lecky points out that "the predominating passion of every man colours the whole train of his reasoning, and in every subject he examines he instinctively turns to that aspect which is most congruous to his favourite pursuit".²⁹

In 1640, Puritanism was influenced by two extreme types of thought and organization. At one end of the scale there was Presbyterianism, which stood for stringent control and authority on a democratic basis, and, at the other, came Independency, which stood for individualism in all its

various forms. But even during the Commonwealth, the great period of the sects, a large number of English Puritans refused to arrange themselves definitely under either of these headings. Baxter had nothing but praise for this attitude of mind. He says, "The greatest Advantage which I found for Concord and Pacification was among a great number of Ministers and People who had addicted themselves to no Sect or Party at all, though the Vulgar called them by the name of Presbyterians. And the truth is, as far as I could discover, this was the case of the greatest number of the Godly Ministers and People throughout England. For though Presbytery generally took in Scotland, yet it was but a stranger here."³⁰ When Parliament tried to introduce Presbyterianism into England, it acted on the spur of military necessity rather than from genuine conviction, and the country received from above a ready-made organization which, to be successful, should have grown from below.³¹ The Westminster Assembly bore throughout the marks of its Parliamentary birth. Instead of being allowed to consider a comprehensive programme of reform, the Divines were able to discuss only those particular questions which Parliament thought proper to refer to them, and thus, from the beginning, they took on the character of an advisory body dependent on the civil power.³² For instance, the Assembly drew up a long list of offenders who were to be excluded from the sacrament, drunkards, swearers, blasphemers, profaners of the Lord's Day and extortioners being among the outcasts, but Parliament detracted from the weight and practical efficacy of these provisions by defining the particular matters which the Elders might examine, and giving a right of appeal by way of the Classical, Provincial and National Assemblies to Parliament itself.³³

The failure of Presbyterian organization to establish itself in England has sometimes been exaggerated, for between 1647 and 1658 no fewer than fifteen counties, including London, left records of ordination.³⁴ It is difficult, however, to judge how far these bodies were a living force. Presbyterianism, as it was understood in Scotland and as its friends hoped to introduce it into England, involved a system of social discipline as well as an ecclesiastical organization. Milton said: "Public preaching is the gift of the Spirit, working as best seems to his secret will, but Discipline is the practical work of preaching directed and applied as is most requisite to particular duty . . ."³⁵ This might be entirely true, but

the ordinary man had not jumped out of the frying pan of Laud's dictatorship to scorch himself in the fire of Presbyterian discipline. It was the general luke-warmness of the laity, rather than the hostility of an Independent army or an Erastian Parliament, which prevented a new system of regulation taking the place of the old. Even Baxter, who was exceptional both in character and ability, had to admit that his attempts to establish a godly discipline were useless. He says that out of the four or five who were cast out by excommunication not one was benefited. "Though their wit and the honesty of their neighbours and relations made them live quietly yet their Enmity was much increased, and they themselves so much the worse as convinced the strictest Religious sort that excommunication is not to be used but upon great Necessity." For the sake of example, Baxter continued to wield his authority, but from "very fear of Discipline all the Parish kept off except about 600, when there were in all above 1600 at Age to be communicants".³⁶ Both in his parish and in his *Christian Directory*, Baxter laid down a comprehensive rule of life which differed from the older discipline mainly in its greater reliance on the sanctions of individual conscience and reason. But, while Catholicism had left too little to the individual, Puritanism demanded more solitary effort and sacrifice than the ordinary man was able or ready to make.

The records of the Manchester *classis* contain numerous complaints of Elders who neglected or abused their duties. At Chorlton, the minister produced various allegations against the Elders which they returned with interest, and, at Prestwich, there was a long wrangle between the minister and a certain Broxup, who accused him of riding his horse wildly and being drunk. One apparently impartial witness who was called in said he thought the minister was "more distempered at that time with drinke then at another time, but woulde not take his oath that he was drunke". Interspersed with these lively episodes are various charges of clandestine marriage, fornication and similar offences.³⁷ What little vitality the Presbyterian system possessed was further weakened by the victory of the Independents at Naseby. According to Dr. Shaw, the triumph of the army struck a death-blow at Presbyterian discipline by withdrawing the civil arm which had lent strength to its censures.³⁸

Yet, despite the weakness of ecclesiastical organization, Puritan morality in its more stringent forms was not

unknown in England during the Interregnum, for the records both of the Council of State and of municipalities and counties are full of attempts to enforce a moral code whose strictness was equalled only by its narrowness. To most English Puritans, "immorality" already bore the limited meaning which it usually has to day. In contrast both with Laud and Baxter, who tried to bring every activity into line with a certain ideal of conduct, they were content to suppress the obvious vices of licentiousness, drunkenness, and swearing. During the long years when they had been persecuted by Church and State, they had learnt to associate these sins with the Court on the one hand, and with the noisy rabble who disregarded their teaching on the other. If it is true that from a statistical standpoint Puritanism was middle class, the same is still more true of its moral attitude.

In 1650, an Act was passed which made adultery a capital offence,³⁹ but, though important as indicating an attitude of mind, it was rarely enforced.⁴⁰ Several of the printed quarter session records contain numerous indictments for fornication,⁴¹ and in Devonshire an order was made that every woman who had ever had an illegitimate child was to be committed for trial unless she had been previously punished.⁴² Swearing was another offence which was anathema to the Puritans. In Devonshire, men were fined six and eightpence for a single oath, but the charge was reduced to three and eightpence "on taking a quantity". A large number of these cases was disposed of at quarter sessions without being sent up for trial.⁴³ But the blackest of all sins was drunkenness, and during the Commonwealth a vigorous attempt was made to convert England into a sober country. The Council continually issued instructions on this point to the local authorities,⁴⁴ and some of them took up the matter with a vigour born of real conviction. In 1656, the Mayor of Salisbury wrote a long and eloquent letter to the justices, entreating them to suppress three or four disorderly alehouses. "God hath honored you in callinge you to a place of power and trust . . . You are postinge to the grave every day ; you dwell uppon the borders of eternity ; your breath is in your nostrells ; therefore duple and treble your resolutions to bee zealous in a good thinge . . . How dreadfull will a dieinge bed bee to a negligent magistrate . . ." ⁴⁵ In London, the inspection of public houses and suppression of "tippling" was carried out with great vigour, partly because of its usefulness as a police measure.

In 1644, the Aldermen were ordered to take notice of all cases of drunkenness and swearing committed by those who were guilty of "inordinate hauntinge and tiplinge in any of the Taverns and Inns and Alehouses".⁴⁶ The Westminster justices were told to report what number of alehouses were necessary in each parish. Disorderly taverns were to be suppressed, and, when any keeper died, the licence was not to be renewed until the number of taverns had been reduced.⁴⁷ A similar motion was passed in 1654 at the general sessions for the City of London.⁴⁸

Under the Major Generals' rule Puritan morality was enforced with renewed vigour. Their commissions were wide, but it is noteworthy that, apart from suppressing vagabonds, they made little attempt to deal with industrial or social problems in any wide sense. Drunkenness, swearing and loose-living still remained the deadly sins, and Worsley wrote in 1655 that he had been persuading some corporations and the more active citizens to put the laws into execution against them.⁴⁹ At Coventry, Whalley was deeply concerned with the influence of wicked magistrates, who undid the work of the godly ones, so that they "no sooner suppress alehouses, but they are set up againe". He adds that he intends to give orders that all unnecessary alehouses are to be closed, and to remind the magistrates what is expected of them, "so they should answeare the end of theyr magistracy, viz. depresse sinn and wickednes, and incourage godlynes."⁵⁰ From Cheshire, came the report that two hundred alehouses had been suppressed, and those persons who had contracted illegal marriages punished.⁵¹

The life of the Major Generals was short, and they were dissolved amid universal rejoicing. But in two respects their rule had been significant. The wide scope of their commissions was a tacit admission that Puritan ecclesiastics had failed in the administration of social discipline, and that it must therefore be taken over by the civil authorities. Again, the Major Generals' practical interpretation of the limit of their duties was interesting, for, despite the wide extent of their powers, they reserved their censures for a certain type of offence. This attitude persisted among the middle classes, who were the backbone of Puritanism, and so long as a man was not a notorious drunkard or profligate his morals were regarded as his private concern.

Partly through the influence of economic facts and partly through the weakness of church organization, it had become

clear by the end of the Interregnum that those aspects of Puritanism which made for social stringency had struck no deep roots in England. A Frenchman, writing home in 1659, gives the following description of English religion : " I extremely wondered to find those whom they called Presbyterians and who would imitate us of the religion in France and Geneva to have their discipline so confused and different . . . You may well imagine by the manner of the people and their prodigious opinions that there is no catechism or sacraments duly administered. *The religion of England is preaching and sitting still on Sundays.*" ⁵² It was hardly to be expected that a foreigner would be acute enough to realize that the vigour which English Puritans failed to display in the aforesaid matters they expended in another direction. Though religious exercises might be reserved for Sundays, the week was fully occupied in the work of economic salvation.

(III) AN ACTIVE FAITH

The Catholic religion erected a barrier between the individual soul and God. Puritanism, on the other hand, insisted that direct relations between man and his Creator were supremely important, and taught that salvation apart from personal faith was impossible. But, though works alone could not save a soul from Hell, they were the outward and manifest revelation of a state of grace. A Puritan minister, speaking in 1658, declared that true religion should compel men to labour, " for grace comes with Majesty upon the heart. 'Tis not in *sermone* but in *virtute*. Grace doth not lie as a sleepy habit in the soule, but will put forth itself in vigorous and glorious actings." ⁵³ Another preacher condemned an unprofitable member as a burden to any Christian society. Therefore " be regular. Servants must know their offices and stick to their several tasks . . . This is the apostles' rule, do your business, worke with your own hands ". ⁵⁴ Richard Baxter taught that labour was wholesome and necessary for everyone, including the rich. " It is action that God is most served and honoured by ; not so much by our being able to do good, but by our doing it." Action must not be spasmodic and dependent on the inspiration of the moment, but must be regulated within a " calling ", which Baxter defines as a stated, regular course of labour. ⁵⁵ Again, E. Reynolds, when preaching to the East India Company, says

that "faith is an active and working grace . . . It will not let men be idle and unfruitful . . . And thereupon what it findeth to do, it doth with its might".⁵⁶ There was nothing essentially individualistic in this doctrine of a calling, for those who upheld it insisted that "good men are studious and active to the publicke Good . . . as well as for their owne, yea above, and with neglect of their owne Good".⁵⁷ Each member of the Christian state was to cultivate his particular gift for the good of the whole, "every man to contribute his abilities of what kind soever to be serviceable to the community."⁵⁸ Preaching to the Company of Haberdashers in 1641, S. Fawcett said: "In respect of ourselves . . . there is no true prospering but in the prosperity of Jerusalem, in the publique weale . . . What folly and madness is it for a man at Sea to be decking and trimming up his owne private cabin, and in the meane time take no care of saving the whole Ship which is in danger."⁵⁹

Few ideals are strong enough to hold out against the main stream of interests. The demands which Puritanism made on the individual soul were too high, for, after having abolished most of the institutions which had helped to enforce the dictates of a social conscience, it demanded that the same and better results should be obtained through the solitary efforts of a number of individuals. For the few who succeeded in this struggle, there were many who failed. The average man, with his rare moments of exaltation and his many hours of subjection to the grey necessities of life, responded more readily to that part of Puritan ethics which fitted in with his inclinations and interests. Modern enterprise in industry, commerce and agriculture had made rapid strides before 1640, but its progress had been hampered by the theory and practice of paternal control, which at its worst had been corrupt and obstructive, and even at its best had interfered considerably with the free action of individuals. Puritanism was strongest among those classes who were best able to take care of themselves, and had nothing to gain and all to lose by the interference of Church and State in economic affairs. Now, this doctrine of a calling had arisen to sanctify their untiring devotion to personal interests, and, in their delight at the discovery, they forgot the stipulation that individual effort must always be subordinated to the good of the whole.

It was by no means altogether the fault of the lay Puritans that religion became in some measure commercialized. Even Richard Baxter laid himself open to misinterpretation

when, in discussing how to choose a calling, he said that the gain involved might be considered, if duly subordinated to higher matters, "That is, you may labour in that manner as tendeth most to your success and lawful gain; you are bound to improve your Master's talents; but this your end must be, that you may be the better provided to do God service, and may do the more good with what you have".⁶⁰ Other preachers saw no harm in pointing out to their congregations that, with due care, they might make the best of both worlds. Religion no longer involved the renunciation of the world and the flesh, and a man might even sup with the Devil if he used a long enough spoon. "Be not jealous as if Christ's government would eclipse your greatness," says one preacher, "Christ's rule and your honours are not incompatible, the Lord Jesus tells us his kingdom is not of this world, he commands that Cæsar have his right."⁶¹ Hitherto religion had been reproached for its lack of commercial value—"What profit is there in serving the Lord?" But its new interpreters claimed to be able to free it from this scandal, for by religion came wisdom, riches, power and honour.⁶² Lay writers eagerly adopted this new and agreeable form of belief. M. Wren, writing in 1660, observes that "faith is a successful grace, and hath a promise of prospering. Believe in the Lord your God, so shall you be established, believe his prophets, so shall you prosper". Since it is in God's power to distribute earthly favours, it is "therefore your duty in all your addresses unto action to make your first application unto God . . . that your labours may so be conversant about treasures here below as that your hearts and affections may be upon things above".⁶³ Another writer remarked that "a well-monied man that is prudent, by God's blessing gets up and above his neighbours".⁶⁴

The doctrine that inward salvation should be expressed in continuous labour merged into the belief that success was the hall-mark of godliness. Achievement rather than effort came to be regarded as acceptable in the eyes of God and man, and those who fell by the wayside were left to the Heaven-sent punishment of their own incompetence. A sermon preached in 1655 before the Lord Mayor and Aldermen shows how easily this change of doctrine could come about. The preacher remarks that the familiar warning against laying up earthly treasures should not be taken too literally. "Industry and diligence in a lawfull and warrantable Vocation and Calling, in order to gain a competent

provision of earthly things for our Children and Relations is not condemned in Sacred Writ, but commended." Men should not fall into the old-fashioned error of thinking that earthly success makes their hope of Heaven more slender. On the contrary, "wisdom is more conspicuous and useful with than without an Inheritance. A Diamond in a dirty rag is a Diamond, but in a gilt ring it sparkles and is more illustrious. So grace in a poor man is grace, and 'tis beautiful, but grace in a rich man is more conspicuous, more useful." ⁶⁵ One imagines that the City magnates were much edified by this discourse. In the Middle Ages, there had been a strong disposition to connect poverty and saintliness, and Kings and Emperors had hoped to increase their chances of salvation by washing beggars' feet. Part of Christ's nature was thought to be incarnate in poor men, but now the positions were reversed, and a preacher declared that rich men should be specially zealous in serving God because their powerful positions made them more closely akin to Him. "Wisdom is good without an inheritance," he said, "but it cannot do so much good when it is seated in a poore man as when it is joyned with an inheritance . . . If the man be gracious and religious that is great and rich, he will make sweeter harmony and melody in God's eares than if he were poore and in low estate." ⁶⁶

The changed attitude adopted by religion towards riches and poverty influenced the way in which Governments and individuals treated the question of poor relief. During the Commonwealth, there were many schemes for ameliorating unemployment, but nearly all of them bore traces of a growing disposition to regard poverty as a crime and disgrace.⁶⁷ Vagrants were to be treated with the utmost severity. For them "the House of Correction or Common gaol is the fittest place; and to the House of Correction is he to be sent . . . But if they have able bodies they are to be compelled to labour, for the rule of Christ is, that such as will not labour must not eat." ⁶⁸ Few writers doubted that the idle poor were idle through choice. "S.T." insisted that the only thing to be done with them was to set them forcibly to work,⁶⁹ and even Hartlib had no compunction in sending able-bodied beggars to the House of Correction, "there to remain in hard work and hard lodging," till they promised amendment.⁷⁰

Contemporary literature abounds with complaints of the new attitude towards poverty, and some writers attributed

the change to religious causes. A broadside of 1652 declared that :—

“ The Heavens do frown, the earth doth groan
To hear the poor man make his moan :
The God of love doth hear the cry
Of the poor Widowe’s misery ;
And eke the fatherlesse’ complaint
Which they make of the formall Saint.”

Those who advocate community of goods as a remedy for growing social distress are dismissed as “ Ranters ”, yet it is the orthodox Puritans who rant the most, for despite their great professions, “ to feed the hungry and naked cloath, it is a work they much do loath.”⁷¹ S. Richardson bewailed the fact that the Papists, though their principles were bad, were more charitable than “ Christians ”,⁷² and Balthazar Gerbier agreed that they set Protestants a much needed example. “ If the Papists did rely as much on faith as reformed professors of the gospel (according to our English tenets) do ; or that the Reformed professors did soe much practice charity as the Papists,” the world would be a much happier place.⁷³ T. Watson, writing in 1658, declared that the Church of Rome was not altogether mistaken in accusing the reformed churches of uncharitableness. “ Christians,” he said, “ must not onely have the wings of faith to flie, but hands under their wings to worke the works of mercy . . . The Lampe of faith must be filled with the oile of Charity. . . ”⁷⁴

The attitude of George Fox and his followers was in striking contrast to that of most orthodox Puritans. It is significant that Quakerism appealed to the lowest classes more than any other variety of Puritanism, and one writer went so far as to complain that “ it was made up of the dregs of the common people ”.⁷⁵ To Fox, the continued sufferings of the poor were an ironic comment on the value of most religious professions. He pointed to the example of the Israelites, who provided for the poor by means of tithes. “ Now judge yourselves,” he said, “ and see how far short you come of them in life and practice, which say you are Christians and profess the Gospel ; these things are a grief to many sober people in the City, to see that magistrates have no more feeling of these things, and yet so much profession of Religion, and preaching among them, and so much richer than men never knew want of . . . ”⁷⁶

The influence of the Digger agitation possibly inspired Fox to issue a warning to "you that set your nests on high, joyne house to house, field to field till there be no place for the poor. . ." ⁷⁷ Not content with general admonitions, he appealed to specific lay authorities to bestir themselves to help the poor. J. Bellers published an abstract of his advice in 1657 to the magistrates of London, in the course of which he exhorted them to consider the number of poor men, widows, and fatherless children who thronged their streets, and asked, "Is not this a shame to your Christianity?" God has commanded that the poor should be provided for, and "him that turns his ear from hearing the Cry of the Poor, the Lord will not regard, he that despiseth the Poor despiseth his Maker". ⁷⁸ Again in 1658, Fox appealed to the Protector and Parliament of England to remedy the same evil. "And then again friends, you that be called Christians, take heed and see that there be no Beggars amongst you. . . . Some are full of plenty, destroying through superfluity; others being in poverty, which are ready to perish through want of the creatures, raise up thoughts in them to steale; which them that are rich, . . . might take away the occasion, and prevent temptation, or take them into some employment." ⁷⁹

The remorseless doctrine of self-help, which orthodox Puritanism attempted to inculcate, made it necessary for the man who wished to survive to devote himself wholeheartedly to making a success of his calling. In this, he was encouraged by another tenet of Puritanism—its distrust of all worldly pastimes and sports. One of the points most violently disputed between Puritans and Anglicans had been the question of Sunday games. Laud's *Book of Sports* and Prynne's *Histriomastriæ* brought out the divergent points of view, and, in doing so, showed that the difference went far deeper than the question of Sunday observance. Just as the Catholic religion had aimed at embracing the whole of the terrestrial world, so it had tried to embrace every aspect of human life, and to bring all physical sensations and intellectual interests under its control. This view had often been made the excuse for mere frivolity or loose living, and to the zealous Puritan such a connection between the flesh and the spirit seemed a mere trafficking with the Devil. To him, earthly and heavenly things belonged to different spheres, and while work might be a means of expressing

inward grace, amusements were a dangerous waste of time and should be reduced to a minimum.

Saints' Days had been unproductive from an economic point of view, and thus Parliament was sure of the support of both religious and business enthusiasts when in 1647 it passed an ordinance abolishing festivals, and declared that the second Tuesday in every month was to be a holiday, masters being ordered to grant their servants as much time as could be conveniently spared from their work.⁸⁰ The religious enthusiasm which had been distributed over a large number of festivals was now concentrated on the strict observance of the Sabbath. The Puritans' conception of the way in which it should be spent was typical of the dualism which coloured their whole view of life. The chief characteristic of the Lord's Day was that on it no one should take part in any ordinary tasks or recreations. Parliament declared that no goods were to be sold, no travelling or worldly labours were to take place, recreations and pastimes were to cease, and maypoles, the peculiar symbols of ungodliness, were to be altogether destroyed.⁸¹ It is unlikely that this legislation met with much success. The Lord Mayor was continually issuing proclamations against those who profaned the Sabbath, and he complained that, despite his efforts, children and servants continued to play in the fields near the City. He directed fathers of families and masters to be very vigilant in repressing this sin.⁸³

The chief national amusements were subjected to a somewhat indiscriminate condemnation, cock-fighting being let off more lightly than play-acting, which was said to cause disorder and provoke God's wrath.⁸⁴ In 1654 horse-racing was forbidden for six months, because mischievous plots had been hatched at the races.⁸⁵ It is notable that, in administering this ordinance, the Major-Generals showed a tender regard for social distinctions. Major Whalley wrote to the Protector from Lincoln that he had met the Earl of Exeter and been asked by him if Lady Grantham's cup might be competed for at Lincoln. "I assured him it was not your highness' intention in the suppressing of horse races to abridge gentlemen of that sport, but to prevent the great confluences of irreconcilable enemies."⁸⁶

At the Restoration horse-racing returned, together with swearing and drinking and other fashionable sins on which Puritanism had frowned. But the gospel of hard work, unrelieved by amusements, was too convenient from an economic

point of view to be overthrown, at least as far as the lower classes were concerned. Towards the end of the century, there were various attempts to calculate how much the nation lost by the frivolity and slothfulness of its labouring population. Pollexfen complained of the waste which was due to unnecessary holidays, and estimated the national loss at £500,000 for every holiday which was kept.⁸⁷ Since it was nearly always assumed that the labourer was an incorrigibly lazy fellow, his employers felt a glow of positive righteousness in making it difficult for him to fritter away his time in unproductive amusements. Long hours and low wages were a kindness to him if he did but know it. Even up to recent times, the sight of a poor man amusing himself aroused a feeling of moral indignation in his superiors.

At home, the doctrine of an active faith resulted in a sort of sanctified industrialism. Abroad, it produced sanctified imperialism. Just as individuals were supposed to glorify God by rising to a higher position than their fellows, so a chosen nation was said to exalt Him by dominating its neighbours. One writer declared that, "As a well monied man that is prudent, by God's blessing gets up and above all his Neighbours; so it would bee with a rich State, through God's being well managed." Nations should always be on the alert, ready to attack and acquire fresh provinces as well as to defend existing possessions, "for as Christ saith, to him that hath (using it well) shall be given. This riches is your strong tower."⁸⁸

Cromwell's obsession with the idea of a Protestant Empire, under the leadership of England, was due to a genuine belief in his own mission to reform the world. He pointed out to the strictly practical Dutch commissioners that they could have no conception of what God might accomplish by the arm of the two Protestant republics, and was disappointed at their failure to echo his own enthusiasm.⁸⁹ Lesser men were equally sure that England was marked out for universal dominion, though in their writings there is little trace of the idealism which influenced Cromwell. A pamphlet published in 1657 described the way in which England's past and future greatness was based on the sure foundation of divine favour. A combination of Christian faith and restless industry was invincible. "Believe it," says the writer, "a Christian State that shall cast itself and its affairs on the protection of Heaven and then set on action corresponding to that faith that religion enjoins,

shall prove invincible, and mount to a higher pitch of greatness and Glory than ever yet was attained." England's fitness for world supremacy was due both to her innate good qualities and to her close alliance with the Divine Powers, for "they in a more special manner own Providence". The Protestant League, which Cromwell had designed primarily as a religious force, appealed to this writer as a means of aggression, and he looked forward to the time when a union of Protestant states should give England the opportunity to dominate the world.⁹⁰

It was impossible for England in the seventeenth century to realize Imperialistic dreams in Europe, but the American colonies offered real scope for the adventurous man who was upheld by the consciousness of a moral purpose. Colonization as a national and religious mission was advocated by a Northamptonshire minister, who claimed to be supported by seventy English divines and some "worthy Scottish ministers". He declared that, when we considered how fully the gospel had been imparted to our land and how we abounded in shipping and all necessary equipment, we must realize that we had been destined for some great purpose. If we would but cast our bread upon the waters, we might count on a generous return in material as well as spiritual blessings. "Nor is the Arme of the Lord shortened, or his wonted bounty to be restrained, but that undertaking the voyage principally for God's glory and in compassion to men's soules, we may expect a more than ordinary blessing from him, whose usuall Custome is to honour those who honour Him, and most abundantly even in this Life to recompense such religious undertakings." The worthy divines were strictly practical persons and had an intelligent grasp of the economics of the situation. They pointed out that colonization would decrease the numbers of the unemployed, for they could be sent to South Virginia, which abounded in gold and silver and precious stones. Further, to expel the Spaniard would be to do God a service. In short, the divines made out a good case for a sort of commercial crusade, "especially when we may, as now we may, so easily help ourselves."⁹¹

The West Indian expedition and the war against Spain were a demonstration of Puritan faith allied to practical considerations. In recommending the expedition to his Council, Cromwell said: "We consider this attempt because we think God has not brought us hither where we are, but

to consider the work that we may do in the world as well as at home." ⁹² But the expedition was also supposed to rest on a solid commercial basis. Thomas Gage, who did much to influence English opinion, laid great stress on its material side, though he was careful to express his admiration for the "activity of your highnesse his faith (for faith in the saints, in the behalfe of God's glory is an active faith)". ⁹³ The working out of this active faith in the realm of colonial expansion did not follow immediately, and it was left to the nineteenth century, which greatly admired Cromwell, to appreciate fully the ideal of sanctified Imperialism which he had helped to create.

(IV) PURITANISM AND DEMOCRACY

The consequences of the victory of Puritan individualism were not limited to the canonization of the business virtues. Before the new doctrines were monopolized by the middle classes, they were seized upon by the lowest orders in the state, and made the vehicle for a widespread outburst of democratic theories and practices. Waller had prophesied truly when he said that the questioning of traditional authority in the church would have revolutionary consequences in the state. ⁹⁴

This democratic tendency was greatly heightened by the victory of Independency. Clement Walker declared in 1648 that the Independents had cast all mysteries and secrets of government before the vulgar, teaching both the people and the soldiery to criticize their government in the light of first principles. "They have made the people so curious," he said, "that they will never find humility enough to submit to a civil rule." ⁹⁵ His accusation was not unfounded, for Godwin, one of the leading Independents, aimed a shattering blow at the sanctity of established authority when he stated that the law of Nature and Necessity was the "law of God written in the fleshly tables of men's hearts. . . ." ⁹⁶ Taken alone, the Independents' teaching would probably have sufficed to set alight the sparks of democratic revolt which had smouldered since the Reformation, but their tolerant attitude towards the manifold heresies of the Sects made a conflagration inevitable. Though Antinomians, Anabaptists, and Millenarians differed in their theological doctrines, the social implications of these doctrines were much the same. A contemporary writer

says : " I am afraid that Anabaptism is very rife in England, though not perhaps in one entire Body, but scattered in pieces . . . here one tenet of Anabaptism and ther another : yet not so scattered but they must meet in one head, which is the hatred of all Rule." ⁹⁷ Edwards declared that the Sects taught that " all the earth is the Saints and there ought to be a community of goods, and the Saints should share in the lands and estates of gentlemen and rich men." In addition, they had no respect for the existing laws and customs which governed such social institutions as marriage and apprenticeship. ⁹⁸ " To these doctrines," said another writer, " you may joyne their practice. The seditious Pamphlets, the tumultuous risings of rude multitudes threatening blood and destruction, the preaching of coblers, feltmakers, taylors, groomes and women . . ." ⁹⁹ These hostile critics exaggerated the subversive tendencies of the Sects, but it is obvious that such doctrines did not encourage submission to the established order.

During these years, Puritanism helped to bring about the birth of the spirit of modern democracy, a spirit which differed from its mediaeval forerunner in basing its claims on the rights of the individual rather than on those of a group. On its political side, this spirit made itself felt in the *Agreement of the People* and the *Case of the Army*. In the former instance, it was made clear that every individual within the nation should sign the document which inaugurated the new constitution. Parliament was reduced to the level of a mere delegation, and certain important matters were taken completely out of its hands. The Levellers did not realize the full implications of this document, and it was left to Ireton to point out that a political constitution which was founded on the inalienable rights of the individual would lead inevitably to criticism of a social order based on class distinctions.

Though the Levellers were primarily a political body, and disclaimed all kinship with those extreme social democrats, the Diggers,¹⁰⁰ their manifestos were often concerned with the remedying of social and economic grievances. On one occasion, they demanded that all the laws should be translated into English, and that no man's life should be forfeited for any crime short of murder. The Poor Law should be better executed, loose and vagrant people apprehended and relief provided for the aged and impotent. Free schools and almshouses were to be erected for educating and maintaining

the poor. A thorough revision of the land laws was advocated, and though the eldest son might have two-thirds of the inheritance, the rest should be divided equally between the remaining sons.¹⁰¹ John Lilburne waged an unceasing war against privilege in all its forms. One day he was in London attacking the monopoly of the Merchant Adventurers' Company, and the London Government, and the next he was at Epworth urging the commoners to revolt against the enclosers of the fens.

Unlike the Diggers' agitation, the Levellers' movement was not directly inspired by religious motives, but it drew many of its followers from among the Sects, and occasionally attempted to justify itself on religious grounds. Edwards declares that Lilburne was the darling of the Sectaries, and that one devotee used to fall on his knees and pray: "O Lord, cast down and confound all monarchs, and lift up and advance thy servant, John Lilburne."¹⁰² In a manifesto published by Lilburne, Walwyn, and Prince, the theory of social obligations is based partly on religion, "since no man is born for himself only, but obliged by the Law of Nature (which reaches all), of Christianity (which engages us as Christians) and of Public Societie and Government to employ our endeavours for advance of a communitive Happinesse, of equall concernment, to others as our selves."¹⁰³ Lilburne, who was never content to suffer in silence, made a speech from the pillory in which he declared, "It is better for a man to be willing and contented to let all goe for the enjoying of Christ and doing Him service, then to sit downe and sleepe in a whole skinne, though in so doing he gain all the world, and see Him dishonoured, His glory and truth trodden under foot, and the blood of His servants shed and spilt."¹⁰⁴

The Digger movement was the most remarkable attempt at social democracy under the Commonwealth, and throughout it was strongly influenced, if not wholly inspired, by religious motives. In their doctrine of the "inner light", their refusal to take off their hats before the Lord General, their hatred of any kind of war, and, indeed, in their whole view of life, the Diggers bear strong resemblance to the Quakers.¹⁰⁵ Winstanley describes his conversion to communistic principles in the *New Law of Righteousness*, and, from this account, it is clear that a mystical sort of religion was the inspiration on which he acted. He tells how he fell into a trance and heard a voice say: "Work together,

eat bread together. Declare this all abroad. Likewise I heard the words, 'Whosoever it is that labours in the earth for any person and persons that lift up themselves as Lords and Rulers over others and that doth not look upon themselves as equal to others in the Creation, the hand of the Lord shall be upon that Labourer. I the Lord have spoke it, and I will do it.' Declare this all abroad."¹⁰⁶ Throughout the various pamphlets, which together make up a fairly complete social theory, the mystical element is dominant, and whereas other reformers trusted to mechanical devices to improve men's lot, Winstanley insisted that the spirit alone could give new life.¹⁰⁷ Existing social conditions were referred to a Christian tribunal and condemned by it. At this very day, says Winstanley, poor people are forced to work for a miserable wage which is not sufficient to provide them with bread, while those who dwell in idleness enjoy the fullness of the earth. If a protest is raised against this system, the rich men fly to the cover provided by orthodox religion, and induce their priests to declare that inward satisfaction of mind is all that the poor can hope for in this world. "But," says Winstanley, "I tell you and your Preachers that Scripture which saith the poor shall inherit the earth is really and materially to be fulfilled. . . ." Men may jeer at the name of Leveller, but "I tell you Jesus Christ, which is the powerfull Spirit of Love, is the head Leveller, and as he is lifted up he will draw all men after him, and leave you naked and bare".¹⁰⁸ The *Saints' Paradise*, which was the last of Winstanley's works, deals almost solely with man's spiritual condition, and bears clear traces of the influence of Quakerism.¹⁰⁹

Between 1640 and 1660 there was a widespread democratic agitation on the part of the lower orders in the City government and in the London Companies.¹¹⁰ This movement differed both in extent and kind from earlier outbursts of discontent, and though it is difficult to trace in it the direct influence of religious thought, it seems probable that the revolutionary tenets of the Sects, which included a large number of small craftsmen, were partly responsible for its outbreak. In their appeals to Nature and Reason, the commonalties of the Companies were certainly borrowing the framework, if not the substance of the teaching of the less orthodox religious bodies.

The Sectaries, and, still more, the Quakers, tried to reform industrial life in accordance with religious principles.

In 1655, the Fifth Monarchy Men issued a manifesto to the "Nailors and Tradesmen near Birmingham", imploring them to bring their business dealings into line with their religious pretensions. The writer says that he is speaking primarily to the "rich, covetous, and uncharitable Iron-mongers of mine own native country", and he charges them to amend their lives so that they may "live to that end God gave you a beeing, the generall good". Their workmen's wages should be increased by at least twopence in the shilling, and, if this homily bears no fruit, the writer advises his "suffering brethren" to "take my counsel, let them work themselves; for certain you that make the ware are the most considerable, though least valued and worst provided for".¹¹¹ George Fox continually attempted to introduce a more humane spirit into commercial dealings. He exhorted all merchants and tradesmen to speak the truth, deal honestly, and keep out of debt. "For Friends, if you Be not faithful in the Outward Treasure, Outward Mammon, who will trust you with the True Treasure? or who can believe that you have the True Treasure, but that you speak by hearsay of it?"¹¹² Fox tells in his *Journal* how he went into fairs and markets to urge men to deal fairly with one another, "to speak the truth, to let their yea be yea, and their nay be nay; and to do unto others as they would have others do unto them."¹¹³ The most striking instance of his intervention in industrial life is his well-known encounter with the Mansfield justices, who were discussing the assessment of wages. He says: "It was upon me from the Lord to go and speak to the justices, that they should not oppress the servants in their wages," but he was disconcerted by the presence of some fiddlers, and went away without delivering the message. In the morning he was struck blind, and, taking this as a sign from Heaven, he ran after the justices, going eight miles before he caught them up. His sight returned, and, "when I was come to the house where they were, and many servants with them, I exhorted the justices not to oppress the servants in their wages, but to do that which was right and just to them; and I exhorted the servants to do their duties, and serve honestly, etc. They all received my exhortation kindly; for I was moved of the Lord therein."¹¹⁴

That aspect of Puritan teaching which impressed men with the sanctity of every individual, however humble, did not produce immediate results. The democratic ferment,

which was its means of expression, was short-lived, for it lacked the vigour to pursue its objects in the teeth of powerful opposition from the strongest interests in the country. It was the materialistic side of Puritanism which took firm root, and flourished exceedingly during the period of economic expansion which marked the closing years of the seventeenth century. Nevertheless, the beginnings of modern democracy under the Commonwealth have a more than academic interest. Though it is easy to repress revolutionary movements it is less easy to crush opinions. There is little doubt that J. Bellers was considerably influenced by the history and theory of the Diggers, and he in his turn influenced Robert Owen.¹¹⁵ Again, when the history of the craft gilds is considered, it is not altogether fanciful to see in the Commonwealth agitation the beginnings of modern Trade Unionism. It seems that there are some grounds for saying that the democratic tendencies of Puritanism were overlaid rather than crushed by the opposing forces.

(V) THE DAWN OF THE AGE OF REASON

While religion was primarily responsible for the growth of individualism during the Interregnum, it was the philosophers who contributed most to another significant development of the time—the dawn of the Age of Reason. This development had important implications in the economic sphere, for though practical men often despise the philosopher, they owe him an unacknowledged debt for his part in determining the general principles which uphold the society in which their activities are carried on. Before 1640, the free play of individual reason in all departments of life had been suspected, and restrained by an authoritarian and ethical conception of society. The publication of Hobbes' *Leviathan* was an indication that this view had definitely given way before the new forces of individualism and utility.

The philosophy of Reason which is associated with Descartes took root in England among the Cambridge school of rationalists, most of whom were Puritans and members of Emmanuel College.¹¹⁶ These men had no intention of making religion give way to reason, but aimed at a union between the two which would strengthen both. Whereas theologians of a former age had distrusted the free development of man's powers and sought to limit them,

Whicote now declared, "There is no inconsistency between the grace of God and the calling upon men carefully to use, improve, and employ the principles of God's creation. . . . The spirit of reason in man is the candle of the Lord, lighted by God, and lighting man to God."¹¹⁷ In the world of affairs, Milton came nearest to uniting religion to reason, for while many Puritans made a sharp antithesis between profane and spiritual matters, he saw life as a whole which could be made harmonious. It was this vision which inspired him to take up the cause of free expression and declare that, "He who destroys a good book, kills Reason itself, kills the image of God as it were in the eye."¹¹⁸ Some of the democratic reformers identified reason with a religious spirit which attempted to order the world in accordance with the principles of equality and freedom. Thus, the Diggers maintained that men were lighted by the spirit of God, "this light I take to be that pure spirit in men which wee call Reason . . . from which there issued out that golden rule or law which we call equity."¹¹⁹

Neither reason and religion nor reason and democracy were destined to make a happy and successful alliance in seventeenth century England. To the minds of a large number of men utilitarianism and reason seemed more natural allies, and their union had the advantage of providing a philosophical justification for the cruder aspects of human nature. Hobbes constantly asserted that it was the desire for power which determined all human activities. "The Passions which most of all cause the differences of Wit are principally the more or lesse Desire of Powere, of Riches, of Knowledge, and of Honour. All which may be reduced to the first, that is Desire of Powere. For Riches, Knowledge, and Honour are but severall sorts of Power."¹²⁰ The value of a human being is not absolute, but dependent on the power which he possesses and the use which other men think he can make of it. Therefore "covetousnesse of great Riches, and ambition of great Honours, are Honourable ; as signes of power to obtain them".¹²¹ The state is nothing more nor less than a mutual protection society, which originated to save men from annihilating themselves. As the state was created on a basis of self-interest, so it must continue to the end of time, "for of the voluntary acts of every man the object is some Good to himselfe." Fear, and the love of glory are the only motives which can be safely reckoned on in governing mankind, but even the latter "is

a Generosity too rarely found to be presumed on, especially in the pursuers of Wealth, Command, or Sensuall Pleasure ; which are the greatest part of Mankind. The Passion to be reckoned upon, is Fear".¹²² The functional view of society had emphasized the duties performed by the various classes in the community, and had tried to distribute burdens according to men's capacity to bear them. But *Leviathan* was concerned only with keeping his subjects from cutting one another's throats, and since this protection benefited all men alike, they all had to pay towards the maintenance of their protector.¹²³

Hobbes paid lip service to religion and used texts with the lavishness of a mediaeval writer, but it is clear that he had no serious religious convictions. He remarks that man, alone among the animals, has a religious sense, this being due partly to curiosity and partly to a desire, inspired by fear, to arrive at final causes.¹²⁴ He distinguishes between public worship, which is "the Worship that a Commonwealth performeth as one Person", and private worship, which is "in secret free" but can never be openly practised without some restraint from the laws or from public opinion.¹²⁵ The whole character of Hobbes's philosophy made religion impossible, for to him man was a creature of pure lust and desire, kept in check by the state, which could not afford to let other societies interfere with its dominion.

The view of human reason taken by Milton could not easily be explained in popular terms. Hobbes's attempt to interpret all human activities "reasonably" in terms of appetite made a wider appeal, and among the writings of his contemporaries can be traced the beginnings of that utilitarian philosophy which developed during the eighteenth century. Despite the frequent appeals to law and precedent made by those who inaugurated the Commonwealth government, their authority rested but insecurely on a basis of legal right, and they had everything to gain from a new theory of society according to which governments were justified by their power, rather than by their right to exist. In the *Case of the Commonwealth*, Marchmont Needham stated this theory with a frankness which must have disconcerted some of his readers. He says that, to justify the present Government, he intends to bring forward arguments which will suit each of the two sorts of men who make up the world, "viz. the Consciencious man and the Worldling. The former will approve nothing but what is just and equitable . . .

The latter will embrace anything so it make for his Profit." Needham anticipates that most of his disciples will come from the ranks of the worldlings, "the greater part of the world being led more by the Appetites of Convenience and Commodity than the dictates of Conscience; And it is a more current way of perswasion, by telling men what will be profitable and convenient for them to do, than what they ought to do." All power, no matter how it has been acquired nor how it is exercised, comes from God, and we must submit to it on the grounds that authority founded on injustice and used cruelly is better than no authority at all.¹²⁶ Other writers agreed with Needham that Hobbes was the prophet of the hour. During the year 1651 *Mercurius Politicus* published a popular version of *Leviathan*, in which it was explained that "the Cause in generall which moveth one man to become subject to another is the fear of not otherwise preserving himself". Religion must not be allowed to create a dangerous *imperium in imperio*. By all means let preachers of the gospel be multiplied, but let them be completely under the thumb of "God and the Magistrates". They should be perfect examples of obedience to the powers that be, "and not pretend they must have scruples satisfied before they submit. . . . No State can permit Ministers to pretend scruples, and appoint Meetings and Committees of their own to dispute the power. It will not stand with their safety to permit it, considering the ugly train of consequents that will follow; for the Merchants, the Mercers, or any other society of men in London or elsewhere, may with as much reason take the same Boldness and Pretences. . . ." ¹²⁷

The devotees of *Leviathan* were determined to oust religion from its former position, and to bring it entirely under the control of the secular power. Their task would naturally become easier if religion itself could be brought into line with utilitarian standards. One writer explained that all living creatures were dominated by the senses of pleasure and pain, though man had the additional gift of reason to guide him. It was therefore wrong to allow religion to interfere with this deeply ingrained instinct to attain pleasure and avoid pain. "For, as the sense of pleasure and enjoyment was implanted as well to witness God's bounty as to provoke us to gratitude; therefore unnecessarily to abate man's pleasure is to abate God's glory." God not only takes care for man's being, "which

is politically included under the notion of Peace, but of his Well-being also (which we may comprise under the term of Plenty) to the end that through the sense and pleasure of his enjoyments, we may be stirred up to praise and acknowledge Him." ¹²⁸ Sir John Suckling, writing about this time, expresses much the same opinions. In language which anticipates Voltaire, he describes how men have at all times and in all places felt the need for some sort of God. "And to say truth, a greate parte of our Religion, either directly or indirectly hath been possessed by Heathens. . . ." The only distinguishing point of the Christian religion is its unusually poignant conception of Heaven and Hell, which, by playing on a man's desire to do the best for himself, deters him from evil and incites him to good. ¹²⁹

Utilitarianism in politics and religion inevitably penetrated into the sphere of economic life. Here it was most at home, and here it had the most far-reaching consequences. Joseph Lee, a minister of the gospel, was the most advanced exponent of a doctrine which was soon to gain universal credence. He discussed the vexed question of enclosure, and tried to show that the undoubted gain which it brought to the individual need not be looked upon with any suspicion. "Why is not God's glory our end? forsooth because we aim at our own gaine and advancement of our estates. Are these two ends alwaies incompatible? . . . Do not tradesmen in following their vocations aime at their own advantage, do none of them glorifie God thereby? . . . But why do I speak of earthly things, do not the Saints in all their doings and sufferings for God aime both at God's glory and their own advantage, viz. the salvation of their souls?" A century before Pope bestowed a poetic garb on the prosaic doctrine of the unity of self-love and social, Lee assured his readers that "the advancement of private persons will be the advancement of the publick . . . if men by good husbandry, trenching, manuring their land, etc., do better their Land, is not the Commonwealth enriched therby? so whatsoever benefit is made to ourselves tends to the publick good." ¹³⁰ Lee's view of the land question was shared by the most intelligent and influential men of the time, though some of them might have been shy of expressing their opinions in speculative terms. In trade and industry, the motive of self-interest had long occupied a powerful, if not altogether legitimate place. Now it was openly lauded as the only force capable of moving individuals to any great

effort. A writer, who had prepared some suggestions for a new fishing trade, declared: "The scale by which most men (rich and poor) are like to give a Judgment upon these tymes, is their own private share of happinesse in them. . . ." Men will not be contented till "the affaires of this nation shall bee soe happily ordered as that every private man may see the publike strength and his owne safetie in it consistinge in and extracted out of his owne private happiness and plenty, and those in the first place provided for, and the meanes of that strength, to bee no other then such as himselfe (in his own interest) voluntarily seekes and submitts to. And that all the other present greate pressors upon private estates bee taken off." ¹³¹

The tendency of English thought at this time was to view society as a sort of machine, made up of thousands of individual wheels which were all turned in the same direction by the motive force of self-interest. For good or evil, the old view of society as an organism, whose end was determined by religious beliefs, was banished from the world of theory, as it had already been banished from effective existence in the world of fact. It was to individual brains and character that men looked for inspiration and achievement, and, as they were beginning to take the optimistic view that self love was the same as social, they paid little attention to duties and concentrated on the enjoyment of rights. In 1660 much of this theory had still to be perfected, but it is at least true that Restoration England was very different in its outlook from the country which had first taken up arms against Charles I. Part of its spirit was typified in a ruler who frankly declared that his chief ambition was not to set out on his travels again, while the foundation in 1660 of the Royal Society and the permanent committee of the Privy Council to look after trade marked the triumph of the constructive side of rationalism and utilitarianism.

CHAPTER II

ECONOMIC CONDITIONS, 1640-60

"Can the plough go where there are no men to hold? It's an ill trade that is driven when the master is in the country."

The Parliament Scout, October, 1643.

(I) THE WAR PERIOD, 1640-50

THE overthrow of established beliefs and ideals described in the previous chapter was paralleled in the material sphere by widespread and serious economic dislocation, due mainly to the Civil Wars. Even before the meeting of the Long Parliament there were signs that the revival of trade which had taken place in 1630¹ was far from being a firmly established fact. Professor Scott has pointed out that the finance of the Eleven Years' Personal Government was based, in effect, on a system of indirect taxation of commodities, and, as such, was bound, he thinks, to lead in the long run to industrial and commercial depression.² By 1637-8 indications of serious depression had appeared, and in 1640 the effects of political unrest brought matters to a crisis. After unsuccessful attempts to borrow either from London or abroad, Charles seized bullion from the mint to the value of £180,000, and thus shook still further the national credit, which had already been affected by the troubles in Scotland. Merchants were prevented from meeting their bills of exchange, the importation of bullion ceased, and this financial dislocation inevitably reacted on industry and commerce.³

The bullion crisis of 1640 is important as a symptom, and as a herald of coming events, rather than as an isolated incident. During the next ten years, the country was to experience a period of economic dislocation which was, for modern England, unique in kind. While hostilities with foreign states were an almost normal condition at that time, the horrors of widespread Civil War had never been experienced since the Wars of the Roses. Now, the country was about to plunge into a struggle which, in greater or less degree, affected every class of the community and every

part of the land. The military occupation of large areas was in itself sufficient to put an abrupt end to normal conditions of trade and agriculture. England had already the distinction of being the least military of the greater European countries, and, when the Civil War began, her methods of organization were those which had existed in the sixteenth century. There were no Government manufacturing establishments, and the clothing and provisions of the Parliamentary army were supplied either by purchase in the open market or, more frequently, by contract.⁴ A Government whose liabilities were always in excess of its assets could not be depended upon to supply the armies with adequate food and clothing, and in the State Papers frequent complaints occur as to the insufficiency of the armies' equipment.⁵ From this lack of adequate provision arose the practices of free quarter⁶ and plunder which occupy so much space in the petitions and complaints of the time. The burden of the King's armies was equally, if not more, weighty, for while the Parliamentary forces could rely on a certain measure of comparatively steady financial support, the Royalist troops were mainly dependent on spasmodic private generosity.

Complaints of the depredations of Royalists and Roundheads alike came from all parts of the country. A report from Shropshire stated that taxes, billeting of soldiers and plundering had so impoverished the county that "the length of an age" would not see its recovery.⁷ A petition was presented to the Governor of Hereford in 1642, declaring that the inhabitants had been robbed of all their goods, their cattle driven away, and their corn and grain carried off by the Cavaliers. In 1643 Brampton Bryan castle, the Herefordshire seat of Sir Robert Harley, was besieged. He was robbed of 800 sheep, 30 cows, and a stud of 30 mares, and the village of Brampton was reduced to ruins. It is not surprising to hear that, in 1644, none of his tenants had been paying rent for some time.⁸ In Hampshire, Goring's troops burnt 25 houses at Gosport, and then marched westwards, driving off all the cattle, horses, sheep, and pigs. After having effectively plundered Romsey, "not leaving a sheep or a hog," he marched into the New Forest. The garrisons in the two Hampshire fortresses of Downington Castle and Basing House frequently supplied themselves by means of plunder, which consisted both of agricultural produce and of those wagon-loads of cloth and other merchandise which

made attempts to reach London.⁹ In Hertfordshire, the system of free quarter appears to have been a serious grievance. A petition of 1647 complains of the "intolerable burden of free quarter" which the county has endured for over five months. As a result, many persons are unable to buy bread for their families or make provision for cultivating their own ground. "many of us being thereby utterly disabled to relieve the poor who daily increase and are ready to starve."¹⁰

From East Anglia came complaints of similar devastation and hardship. A contemporary chronicle states that when the Cavalier forces entered Huntingdon, "many houses were plundered to nothing, and . . . very many people are left not worth one penny." Amongst the sufferers were Mr. Falwood, an apothecary, and two woollen-drapers, who were left without a stick of furniture in their houses or a remnant of wares in their shops. In June, 1648, Colonel Sparrow wrote to Sir Harbottle Grimston that the county of Essex was so much exhausted through the exactions of the army, that "it may well be doubted that the poor will be compelled to rise for want of bread."¹¹ An eighteenth century historian of Essex declares that the effect of the siege of Colchester was to deprive the town of the important and benevolent families of Grimston and Lucas, and to bring almost all the inhabitants, and especially the traders, "into inexpressible poverty and distress."¹² The inhabitants of Woburn, in Bedfordshire, told the Lords in 1654 that a body of the King's Horse had fallen on them and plundered them, burning down seventeen or eighteen dwelling-houses, besides malting-houses and outhouses, together with goods and household stuff to the value of £3,869, "whereby many families are left harbourless, and utterly ruined and undone, and many others brought into a very low and sad condition."¹³

In the North of England, it was the Scots' armies who were the worst offenders. Lord Hollis, in speaking of their exactions, declared that a man would have to be very ignorant of the conduct of an unpaid army not to credit the fact that many disorders had taken place and many poor country men had been oppressed and abused, "and more money and provisions, by half, taken and spoiled by them, than would have sufficed for their pay and entertainment, if it had been orderly raised and provided by the authority and

care of the State which was to pay them.”¹⁴ John Turbervill wrote in September, 1640, that the Scots pillaged the country wherever they went, and sent all available plate to Scotland to be coined.¹⁵ Apart from pillaging, Sir H. Slingsby declared that the ordinary exactions of the Scots’ armies were hard enough to bear. Northumberland was assessed at £300 a day and Durham at £350, their share of victualling the army being the contribution of 30,000 weight of bread, 10 tuns of beer, 6,000 weight of cheese, £50 worth of beef, and £24 of mutton, all by the day. In Yorkshire, according to Slingsby, it was the King’s armies who were the most burdensome, the county having maintained at least 30,000 men for more than a month.¹⁶

Even those who escaped the exactions of the armies must have felt the almost intolerable burden of taxation which the country at large, and London in particular, had to bear. Various sources of revenue, such as monopolies and ship-money, which the Stuarts had been able to tap, were now declared illegal, and yet the liabilities of the Interregnum Governments were far greater than those of their predecessors. It was estimated in December, 1642, that the annual expenditure of the army would reach £1,000,000, and that the cost of maintaining the navy would be £300,000. Yet, from the beginning, the Parliament was faced by a deficit of from £400,000 to £500,000.¹⁷

The Government attempted to meet its liabilities partly by means of taxation, which took the form of “monthly” assessments and excise,¹⁸ and partly by borrowing on a large scale from the City and its Companies.¹⁹ Neither of these expedients was likely to stimulate trade, but, naturally, it was the increase in taxation which produced the loudest complaints. In 1653, the Common Council of the City declared that London was incapable of paying her usual contribution towards the monthly assessment, for the crushing weight of taxation had caused large numbers of merchants and wealthy men to withdraw into the country, where the taxes were lighter. Through the decay of foreign and domestic trade, those inhabitants who remained were so deeply impoverished that they could bear no further imposition.²⁰ The excise was attacked for laying its heaviest burdens on the back of trade, and “thereby utterly disheartening the most ingenious and industrious party”. Parliament was accused of favouritism towards the landed proprietors and neglect of the traders’ interests.²¹ A broadside published in 1650

claimed that experience showed that the higher the excise the fewer the goods which were consumed. "Impositions inhauncing the price of commodities make all Trades unwilling, and most unable to have any store or stock of Commodities by them, but they will onely buy for necessity or their present occasion."²² Another writer pointed out that, while it was generally admitted that trade was the most important occupation in the country, the Government imposed an excise which was a wilful destruction of both home and foreign trade.²³ The collection of the excise evidently met with serious opposition, for in 1647 Parliament issued a Declaration, in which it noted the tumults that had occurred in different parts of the country, and promised to remedy some of the incidental grievances.²⁴

The weight of taxation was heavy enough in itself, without the additional grievance of maladministration, but there came complaints of the injustice and inequality which characterized the Parliamentary financial system. In this system, the outstanding feature was the appointment of local committees which were subject to no efficient central control, and which seem to have made the most of their obvious opportunities for feathering their own nests. *Mercurius Democritus* declared in 1653 that the excisemen and committeemen had multiplied their talents to such good purpose that they had increased their incomes from £40 or £50 to £4,000 or £5,000. The newspaper then asks "whether these thriving men . . . in the vacation of all trading, ought not to ease the poor, or be called to an Account?"²⁴

Wherever detailed accounts of the household expenses on Royalist estates have been preserved, they indicate only too clearly the effect of the Parliamentary exactions. The accounts of Sir Hamon Le Strange of Hunstanton Hall show that, in 1643, £300 was paid as a fifth and twentieth part, and 1,600 sheep, all the corn, and various horses were seized, while in 1644 the Scots' forces claimed £200.²⁵ Humbler men laboured under the same burden, as, for instance, when the butchers and other inhabitants of Warwick declared that, by reason of the excessive rates of the excise, they were unable to maintain their families.²⁶ In 1652, the Coggeshall clothiers asked for the speedy repayment of the £6,000 which they had lent to the Government, and declared that, without it, they were on the verge of ruin.²⁷ Special trades asked for the burden of the excise to be lightened, as

when the "poorer sort" of Feltmakers declared in 1648 that taxation was so heavy and materials so scarce that they were forced to pay double for their materials.²⁸ In 1647, the Common Council of the City had occasion to reply to an order from Parliament, demanding a loan of £50,000. They reminded the House that this and other assessments fell not merely upon the Council, but upon the inhabitants of the City, many of whom were dead, more ruined, and others removed from the City with their families. After serious consideration as to the possibility of raising the loan, the Council had decided that the City Treasury was so much exhausted, and its credit in such low esteem, that nothing could be done. "And for individual persons, their means are so strained by the late great loans, and by the decay of trade, that there is no hope of any private persons advancing money."²⁹

Taken alone, the exactions of the armies and the burden of taxation would have been sufficient to bring about a serious dislocation of industry and trade, but, in addition, there must be taken into account the breakdown of means of communication, both internal and external. Royalists and Parliamentarians issued orders forbidding trade with those parts of the country at enmity with themselves, the climax being reached when, in 1648, Charles prohibited the free passage of cloth to London.³⁰ Special permission had to be obtained to go from one part of the country to another. Thus, in 1644, a female haberdasher of Dudley received authority to carry her wares to Coventry, provided she took with her no contraband goods and did not supply the enemy's garrison³¹; and in 1648 J. Holland and T. Skynner applied to the Earl of March for a pass to go to Oxford on business connected with the Merchant Adventurers.³² The importance, from a political and military point of view, of this prohibition of trade with the enemy, is shown by an entry in the State Papers during December, 1645. The Committee of Both Kingdoms wrote to the Committees of Shrewsbury, Coventry, Tewkesbury, Stafford, Northampton, Gloucester, and other towns, warning them that, owing to the continuance of trade between London and Worcester and Hereford, the people were enabled to pay the contributions laid on them by the enemy, and thus the Royalist garrisons could be supplied with ammunition and other necessities. It was stated that if trade were stopped, the garrisons would soon be reduced to such penury that they

would be forced to give in ; " and besides, it would put the people under so great necessity that they would compel the surrender of those places, so as to enjoy their trade again." ³³ The economic importance of this policy is brought out in letters and petitions from the Western counties. In 1643, Lord Herbert of Cherbury wrote to his brother that the county of Herefordshire was in almost as bad a condition as if it had suffered directly from the ravages of war. Shrewsbury, the chief town, was exhausted in its stock of wine, vinegar, and hops, and pepper was at 4s. the lb. " And shortly," writes Lord Herbert, " a want of all commodities that are not native with us will follow, the intercourse between us and London being interdicted." ³⁴ From Worcester, in 1644, a petition was presented to the King by manufacturers and others, pointing out that, as their trades consisted chiefly in clothing and they were now forbidden to communicate with London, they could find no sale for their goods. Permission to trade with London was given, but on the road the clothiers' pack-horses were seized by Royalist troops, and thus their last state was worse than their first. ³⁵

While internal communications were disorganized, foreign trade laboured under equally serious difficulties. In May, 1641, orders went forth that all ports should be closed. ³⁶ Almost immediately, the Lords were confronted by petitions from the owners of ships, complaining that their vessels, laden with woollen goods, masts and other commodities, were detained in port. ³⁷ A conference took place with the Commons on this subject, at which the Earl of Dorset pointed out that many petitions had been received from merchants, who complained that their goods were perishable and the expenses of delay great. It was thereupon resolved that the sooner the ports were opened the better. ³⁸ But freedom of trade was far from being assured, for in December, 1643, an ordinance was passed totally prohibiting trade to the Royalist ports, and declaring that it was lawful for any loyal subject to fit up a ship with the object of seizing those who disobeyed. ³⁹ Foreign nations naturally objected to the order, and in 1644, as a result of representations from Holland, France and Portugal, a committee was appointed to reconsider the question. It reported, however, against free trade, partly on political grounds and partly because it feared lest foreign ships should be employed. ⁴⁰ The difficulties which confronted merchants, both English and foreign,

are illustrated by various petitions. In 1643, the owners of the ship *Clare*, which had lately arrived from the West Indies with a cargo of bullion, cochineal, hides, ginger, and other goods to the value of £80,000, complained that £30,000 had been taken from them as a result of Parliamentary orders. They offered to pay an additional £20,000 if they were allowed to continue to enjoy the privileges of merchants and subjects of the Spanish King.⁴¹

The seizure of ships was a frequent cause of complaint during these years. In 1643 merchants trading to the Straits, Spain, Portugal, and France, told the Council that they had been informed that certain ships which had been forced to put into Falmouth had been seized by the Cavaliers and despoiled. In view of the fact that they daily expected ships from Spain bringing £200,000 worth of silver, they asked for protection from the state.⁴² Again, in the summer of 1642, the West Riding clothiers informed the Commons that a ship, laden with cloth for Hamburg had been stopped at Hull by Sir John Hotham.⁴³ As the war went on, the seizure of merchant ships became an increasing cause for complaint. In particular, the attacks of Prince Rupert seem to have caused serious damage. In August, 1648, the Common Council of the City presented the Lords with a petition for a treaty with the King, pointing out that in default of such an agreement, trade would undoubtedly be ruined. They say that since the Prince commands a considerable part of the English navy, together with other ships, he has been enabled to seize many vessels laden with merchandise and provisions to a very great value. As a result, wholesale ruin is prophesied. Navigation and trade will be destroyed, the Mint will stand idle, and no customs will be collected. Finally, "the innumerable Number of the poorer Sort, dependant only upon Manufactures," will either become rebellious, or will emigrate to foreign countries, carrying their trades with them. "All which will (in a very short time) totally ruin the People of this Kingdom."⁴⁴ A year later, the Council of State wrote to inform the Generals at Sea that they had received repeated complaints on the subject of Rupert's depredations, and that if these were allowed to continue, trade would be ruined and the Customs revenue depleted.⁴⁵ Piracy was no fresh problem,⁴⁶ but it seems likely that it became more prevalent during the war period. In 1648, the Committee of Both Houses told the Lord Admiral that they were receiving a continual flow of complaints as to the

presence of pirates on the Western coasts, whose attacks were ruining merchants and diminishing the Customs revenue.⁴⁷

The Government was forced to take action with regard to the perilous situation at sea, and during the year 1649-50 the Council of State issued continual instructions to the Generals at Sea to provide adequate protection for English merchant ships and fishing vessels. It is probable, too, that the high prices which prevailed about the middle of the century were a strong incentive to the Government to protect the importation of food. In April, 1649, the Council was ordered by Parliament to consider how convoys could be provided for all parts of the country, in order that merchants might be able to send to Hamburg and other towns for corn.⁴⁸ A month later, the Council told the Generals at Sea that a petition had been received from the coast towns of Suffolk, asking for protection for their mackerel fleet. The Generals were ordered to provide a convoy, "all manner of other provisions being now at such an excessive rate".⁴⁹ A certain Mr. Bradshaw, who intended to load ships from the south-west with corn for Chester, was provided with a convoy, in view of the fact that former miscarriages in this trade had resulted in corn rising to very high rates.⁵⁰ Again, during June of the same year, the Generals were reminded of the "growing strength" of the pirates, and the injuries which they inflicted on trade, especially on that of fishing⁵¹; and two months later the Council told Colonel Popham that they had received general complaints of the injuries inflicted on English shipping on the East coasts.⁵²

There is abundant evidence of the effects on finance and trade produced by the political situation. The withdrawal of capital, that nightmare of some modern business men, was a grim reality during the years between 1640 and 1650. After Charles' seizure of the bullion in the Mint, foreign merchants made all haste to collect their debts and leave London as soon as possible.⁵³ In 1643, it was reported that a large number of Southampton merchants had sent their goods to the Isle of Wight, and on the report of the approach of the Royalist army would fly themselves. Even Murford, the Parliamentary Governor of the town, had thought of sailing for New England.⁵⁴ Those merchants who remained found it increasingly difficult to carry on their trades, and Rushworth says that even those of good estates and credit "were hardly able to go on with trade or to pay their debts and maintain their charge."⁵⁵

Shortage of money soon became a frequent complaint in the City. The Recorder of London declared in 1641 that the Chamber of London had no money in it, and added that this deficit was attributed partly to the fact that much coin had been carried away by strangers, "and also the great Fall and Decay of Trading is a Cause of Deadness of Monies."⁵⁶ Those private individuals who still had money in their pockets found that it disappeared quickly into the Government's rapacious maw, in the form either of taxation or of loans. One writer declared in 1642 that trade was utterly destroyed, "there being little store of money by reason of so many and huge sums disposed of this and that way, that the land itselfe is well nigh draune dry."⁵⁷ By November, 1648, the City was said to be "draun dry. Our rich men are gone because the city is the place of taxes and burdens, trade is decayed; our shops shut up in a great measure, our poor do much increase".⁵⁸ To encourage the importation of bullion and prevent its exportation, was an obvious line of policy for the Government to pursue. In 1642, a committee was appointed to consider the petition of the merchants trading in bullion, and, at a meeting of this committee, the Merchant Strangers declared that unless some method were taken to settle the disturbances in the country, strangers would fear to bring in their bullion.⁵⁹ In 1643, 1651, and 1654 ordinances were passed to protect the importation of bullion, and in 1648 its exportation was made subject to more stringent penalties,⁶⁰ but it is doubtful how far these measures were successful in mitigating the effects of political unrest. In December, 1648, the Common Council of the City pointed out to the Lords the intimate connection between political events and financial stability. They recalled how, a few months before, when the whole kingdom had seemed under Parliamentary governance, the population of the City had increased and finance and trade had improved. Then, with the renewed outbreak of war, foreign traders had recalled their stocks, and, owing to the disproportionate rate of exchange, the kingdom was deprived of foreign bullion and its own was exported.⁶¹

The decay of commerce, caused by political and financial upheavals, was explained and described in 1644 by a certain "I. B.", a London merchant. He declared that: "trade is the life of a State, manufactures are the sinews of trade, and money is the soul of both. There is such a necessary connection and dependency between them that the one cannot

subsist without the other." He went on to point out that means of communication had been so badly thrown out of gear by the wars that it was more than possible that trade with foreign countries would be completely lost. Among those who suffered most were the Drapers, the Mercers, the Silkmen, the Grocers, the Haberdashers, and the Vintners, and their troubles reacted on countless handicraftsmen and artificers.⁶² Lord Fairfax and his Council issued a declaration in 1648 which was designed to reduce panic and prevent capital from leaving the country. It was stated that the Royalists had spread rumours abroad that the new Government was planning to destroy property, trade, and commerce, and "thereupon Bills of Exchange begin to be questioned and some persons begin to convey away their goods". The Council declared that these accusations were false, and promised to do all in their power to encourage trade.⁶³

Thomas Violet, reporting to the Parliamentary Committee for the Mint in 1650, gave an illuminating description of commercial England during the war period. "The first and principal cause of the decay of trade has been the late unhappy wars," he said. "Before then, trade was free and flourishing at home and abroad; but immediately after fell into a consumption, under which it has languished ever since." The clothing industry decayed, and many of the workpeople emigrated. Merchants were discouraged, and sometimes ruined, by the seizure of their ships for want of sufficient convoy, "which being never wanting to the Hollanders and Zealanders, they carried the trade from the English merchants and seamen." Commerce was attacked from another side by the shortage of money. Violet declared that, "It is well said by a late writer that 'commerce is the life of a State, manufactures are the sinews of trade, and money is the soul of both'. When the soul is separated from the body it is without life. Our money employed in trade was either belonging to strangers or to our own nation; that of strangers which was employed by exchange, or let out at interest, was soon drawn in and returned from whence it came upon the first breaking out of the war; our merchants had upon their credits made use of it for enlarging their trade, and many of our nation disposed of a great part of their estates into foreign parts, and some also transported their persons and families." The money which remained in the country was gradually exhausted, partly owing to the decay of trade, partly through the charges imposed by the

war, and also by reason of the "late great dearths of corn" which made it necessary to import grain in large quantities.⁶⁴

While it is likely that few parts of the country were untouched by the industrial depression which naturally followed on financial and commercial dislocation,⁶⁵ the seriousness of this depression was most marked in certain areas, such as London and its neighbourhood, the south-west of England, and the extreme north. London, the centre of many industries and the chief exporting city in the kingdom, was peculiarly affected by the direct and indirect consequences of war. From a military, financial, and political point of view, the City occupied a unique position during these years, and it is not surprising that the ordinary business of trade should have been relegated to a secondary position. In 1643, appeared a survey written by a Scotsman, who summed up the situation with all the dour acuteness of his race. "And now truly," he says, "I never saw London, these fortie yeares past, so populous as now it is; only there is a general muttering that money is hard to come by, and that is, because all kinds of trade and trading begin to decay, and they who have money keep it close; for common employments are lately metamorphosed in flying colours, toucking of drummes, inveloping scarffs, and Fandedalian feathers, wherein they have more pleasure than profite; and yet," he adds indulgently, "it best agrees with the people's nature who delight mainly in publick shoves and frivole ostentations." He goes on to describe the daily march of thousands of Londoners to the fields and outworks of the City to erect forts and trenches. Merchants, silkmen, mercers, and shopkeepers are among the throng, and, indeed, it includes "all the Trades, and whole inhabitants within the citie. . . ." But, despite the brave show of arms and colours, the Scotsman predicts that both the City and the kingdom at large will soon be visited by the Nemesis of a war which destroys all normal means of livelihood.⁶⁶ The subordination of industrial to military considerations is illustrated from another source by the ordinances which were passed to relax the apprenticeship laws.

Whereas the evidence of industrial distress in the country at large is found mainly in local histories and family papers, the sufferings of the London populace were directly expressed in petitions to the Lords and Commons. The seamen of the Port of London told the House in 1641 that "the trading of the city and Kingdome is much more of late decayed then

it hath beene for many yeares past ; no man following his trade cheerfully, whilst the lives of himselfe and family, and the publique safety of the Kingdome are in jeopardy". As a result of the depression of trade, many seamen had left England to seek employment in other countries.⁶⁷ In the same year, four petitions were presented to Parliament from various sections of the industrial community. The "poor labouring men known by the name of porters and the lowest members of the City of London", declared that the recent troubles had reduced them to a desperate state. They urged Parliament to take strong measures, saying that "the universal deadness of Trade, it hath been a-languishing long and in divers branches of it, but now the very body of it is strooke lifeless and dead".⁶⁸ The Master, Wardens, and Commonalty of the Silk Throsters complained that they had a large number of unemployed, numbering about thirty thousand, "whose lamentable complaints the Petitioners heare with much grieve and whose dangerous thoughts and opinions of those who shall be found causers of these their extremities will, the Petitioners feare, ere long be too apparently expressed."⁶⁹ "Many thousand" poor Londoners insisted that it was the religious grievances "which occasion so great a decay and stop of trade that your Petitioners are utterly impoverished and our miseries growne unsupportable".⁷⁰ "Many hundreds" of distressed women, the wives and widows of London tradesmen, added their voices to the chorus, and declared that they and their children had been visited by great want and misery through the decay of trading.⁷¹

It soon became apparent that, in London at least, economic distress had reached a point at which it threatened to become a political danger. In January, 1642, Pym read to the Lords a petition from the Common Council of London, which declared that trade was so much depressed and money so scarce, that "innumerable Multitudes" of poor artificers were likely to be sunk in such depths of poverty that they would be forced to make "some dangerous and desperate Attempt". Another petition, this time from the people of Middlesex, stated that all occupations, and especially those of clothing and farming, were in so bad a condition that many thousands were likely to be reduced to extreme poverty.⁷² After reading these and other petitions, Pym proceeded, in an interesting and significant speech, to show their import. He declared that one of the chief dangers of

the time lay in "tumults and Insurrections of the meaner Sort of People, by reason of their ill-Vent of Cloth and other Manufactures, whereby great Multitudes are set on Work who live for the most Part on their daily Gettings, and will in a very short Time be brought to great Extremity if not employed; nothing is more sharp and pressing than Necessity and Want; what they cannot buy they will take; and from the like, Necessity will quickly be derived to the Farmers and Husbandmen, and so grow higher and involve all in an Equality of Misery and Distress".⁷³ Towards the end of January, 1642, the Commons were told that there were "certain Artificers, poor People", at the door. After their petition had been read, the Speaker told them that the House was very sensible of the miseries they suffered, and a message was sent to the Lords to desire a conference on the petition.⁷⁴ On 1st February, Mr. Hollis appeared before the Lords to deliver the petition, which was, he said, presented in the name of thousands of poor people and was so extraordinary both in matter and manner, that the Commons had wished the Lords to read it. "Then Mr. Hollis said, that the Cries of the Poor do pierce the Heavens, and make Impressions in the Hearts of the House of Commons; and they hope it will do the same in their Lordships. Want makes them cry, and Hunger, which breaks through Walls; they have not Bread to put in their Mouths; Relief they must have, which must be by setting them on Work. That cannot be but by settling of Trade and restoring it. Trade will not be settled till their Fears and Distractions be taken away". Hollis went on to explain that while there were certain things in the petition to which Parliament might have objected in normal times, it was not expedient, in view of the present crisis, "to waken a sleepy Lion." He recounted how the petitioners had flocked several times to the House of Commons, crying that they wanted bread, that they refused to starve. This manifestation of discontent, said Hollis, was but a precursor of the coming storm; "these Petitioners do but say what all the rest do think, therefore it is good to prevent it in the Beginning, lest, in the End, it break out and be past Cure."⁷⁵ In February, 1642, the Commons appointed a Committee to consider the "great and General Decay of Trade in this Kingdom",⁷⁶ and about this time a series of attempts were made to revive the clothing trade.

Throughout 1642 and 1643 petitions to Parliament

continued to emphasize the terrible state of trade. It is comparatively rare to find petitions from the counties, but in February, 1642, the people of Northamptonshire begged the Lords to take into consideration the distressed condition of the poorer sort of people, whose wants might lead to dangerous consequences⁷⁷; and in December of that year a petition from Bedfordshire spoke of the disastrous effects of civil war in ruining trade and tillage, and causing depopulation.⁷⁸ At the beginning of the next year, a Hertfordshire petition spoke of the large number of people who threatened to commit outrages and still further increase the want and misery of the petitioners.⁷⁹ The London citizens raised their voices on several occasions,⁸⁰ and in December, 1642, the City complained vehemently of the ruin which had overtaken its trade and industry, and declared that: "The Multitude of poor People in and about this City (who by reason of the Cessation of Trade, want Employment and consequently Bread) infinitely abound."⁸¹

After 1642, the vehemence and frequency of these petitions decreased, but it is difficult to determine how far this was due to any considerable improvement in the situation, and how far it was caused by the growth of an attitude of stoical endurance. References to the decay of trade still continue,⁸² and a petition to the King in 1643 asked if it was possible for him to be ignorant of the "dolefull condition" of his two Kingdoms. "Do you not know," the petitioners asked, "that our houses are plundered, and the fruit of our long labours taken from us; . . . know you not how our lands lye untilled, while your souldiers take our horses by a thousand at a time? And what can follow this but extreme famine?"⁸³ A pamphlet published in 1644 described the way in which the vultures of Europe were hovering over England's carcase. Only the Hollander seems to feel pity for her, and yet he is not averse from seeing his shops full of her plundered goods, her gold brought over in heaps, and her trade almost wholly in his hands. According to this pamphleteer, the exultation of England's enemies is not ill-founded, for, in the country, the yeoman is deprived of men and horses, while, in the town, the tradesman shuts up his shop and takes an enforced holiday, and the merchant goes to the Exchange merely to hear the latest news.⁸⁴ In 1647 "many thousand" poor tradesmen cried, "Oh, that the cravings of our Stomachs could bee heard by the Parliament and the City! . . . Oh, that our pined

Carkusses were open to every pittifull Eye ! . . . Oh, that it were knowne that wee sell our Beds and Cloathes for Bread ! Oh, our Hearts faint and wee are ready to swoone in the top of every Street ! ” All this distress was caused by the taxes, customs and excise that compelled the country-people to raise the price of food and buy nothing but the merest necessities.⁸⁵ In 1649, the year of high prices,⁸⁶ the city of Norwich petitioned Parliament to reduce their taxation, declaring that their trade was utterly ruined, and prices high, wheat being 40s. a comb, rye 22s., and all other provisions at proportionately high rates.⁸⁷

Particular districts suffered unusual hardships, and among these appears to have been the West of England. A letter written by a Bristol ironmonger in 1642 illustrates the conditions under which trade was carried on in those parts. Writing to a customer at Ballingham, near Ross, he regretted that he could supply hira with neither iron nor money. “ I asseure you In regarde of the Marquis of Hertford beinge att Sherborne, and the number of souldiers that are gatheringe out of these neare Countreyes about us, wee cannot have any man will bringe us money, although long dew, and thearfor I cannot do as I have donn, These tymes havinge dried up my small springs that helped me. . . . ”⁸⁸ By 1642, the effects of the war were beginning to have a noticeable effect on the city of Bristol. In this year, the city Chamberlain received orders to borrow £1,000 to buy provisions for the relief of the poor, and when the city Government asked for a loan, it was resolved at a meeting of the Council that, in view of the recent heavy disbursements and decay of trade, no money could be lent.⁸⁹ In 1643, a petition drawn up in the name of the city was presented to the King at Oxford by four Aldermen. This document described the state of the kingdom as one of “ horror and wrath ”, in which trade had ceased, ships were rotting in harbour, and credit was lost.⁹⁰ The climax of Bristol’s misfortunes came in 1643, when it was sacked by the Royalists. Some tradesmen attempted to ransom their goods by offering fines, but, after payment had been made, the soldiers burst into their shops and seized all they could find.⁹¹ It was also reported that attention had been concentrated on the High Street, the chief centre for mercers, silkmen, and linen-drapers, “ in which places they plundered whole shops of wares, whereby many that lived well, and had good estates, are now undone.”⁹² In 1644, owing to the distracted state of the

country, the great fair at St. James's tide was not held. Many persons were said to have quitted the city, leaving their houses uninhabited, and upwards of £200 worth of rents owing to the Corporation were "utterly lost".⁹³ A year later, an outbreak of the plague added the finishing touch to the miseries of the city,⁹⁴ and, when Cromwell entered Bristol in 1645, it was reported to be "so unlike what it had been formerly in its flourishing condition, that it looked now more like a prison than a city, and the people more like prisoners than citizens; being brought so low with taxations, so poor in habit, and so dejected in countenance. . . ." ⁹⁵ At the beginning of 1648 there were signs of reviving prosperity. The waits, who had been neglected for several years, were given new liveries, some of the more pressing creditors were paid off, and a sum of £480 was received from London as rent from a charity estate.⁹⁶ The bad harvests of 1648, however, put an end to all hopes of immediate or complete recovery, and the attention of the Bristol Corporation was concentrated on relieving the worst necessities of the poor. It was resolved that a certain quantity of wheat and other grain should be stored in the Old Jewry, and sold retail at the rate of 8s. 10d. per bushel for wheat, 6s. 8d. for rye, and 4s. for barley, the loss on these transactions being borne by the city government. A contemporary writer points out that these prices were considerably below the ordinary market rates, which were 96s. a quarter for wheat, 80s. for rye, and 64s. for barley.⁹⁷

Both the city and county of Gloucester suffered heavily during the wars. A contemporary account of the taking of Cirencester stated that, while the exact value of the pillage taken from the town was uncertain, it was unquestionably very great, "to the utter ruine of many hundred families." Various farms, together with corn, hay, and cattle, were burnt to the ground, their value being £3,000. After robbing the town, the King's army went on to Stroud, where they seized cloth, wool, yarn, and other goods from the clothiers, "to the utter undoing, not only of them and theirs, but of thousands of poore people, whose very livelihood depends on that trade." So wretched was the condition of the inhabitants of Cirencester that they were driven to petition the King for forgiveness, begging for an opportunity to take up their former trades, so that "many hundreds of people of our towne and adjoyning parts of the countrey, who have no other livelihood, may be againe set on worke and

relieved. . . ." ⁹⁸ The town of Gloucester had to endure the burden of a garrison, which was disappointed to find that, since "the citizens were restrained of trade, and the wages of commerce stopped up", it was impossible to obtain much support from them. ⁹⁹ Six or seven years later, the Mayor and Burgesses informed Parliament that they had found, by sad experience, that the continuance of a garrison in the city had caused the ruin of its trade, "to the utter undoing and impoverishing of many of the inhabitants thereof." ¹⁰⁰ When, in 1651, the Mayor and Corporation were asked by Parliament to state the losses of their town during the war, they declared that, according to a calculation made in 1645, the damage amounted to £34,000 and upwards. A special survey made in 1646 of the losses due to the burning of parts of the town led to an estimate of £26,000, and the Mayor and Corporation declared that, apart from those sufferers whose losses had been estimated, there were many others "who are in much want and misery". ¹⁰¹

In the south-west, considerable damage was inflicted on the clothing trade, ¹⁰² but there are indications that the clothiers were by no means the only sufferers. A letter from the County Committee at Truro in 1646 stated that the county was exhausted, "the people are amazed with rates, free quarters and assessments, and the great delinquents compound in London." ¹⁰³ Richard Grenville wrote from Truro in the preceding year that Cornwall and Devon were so much impoverished by the obstruction of trade that they were not of much use to the King. ¹⁰⁴ Reports from particular places tell the same story. Thus, an entry in the diary of a Devonshire yeoman recounts how, when the Cornishmen came to Crediton, they took away men's goods to the value of £2,500 and upwards. ¹⁰⁵ The tradesmen of Corfe, in Dorset, were between two fires. Those who favoured the Parliamentary cause were pillaged by the garrisons, and a petition survives from a certain Browne, who asks that satisfaction may be given him out of Lady Bankes's estate for the £200 worth of goods which have been taken by the garrison. When the town fell into the hands of Parliament those tradesmen who were Royalists were completely ruined. A Corfe tradesman, writing to Sir Ralph Bankes in 1660, relates how the soldiers carried off all his shop goods, but he was told by a friend in London that it was useless to claim compensation. ¹⁰⁶

In the south-east, Dover and Rye suffered mainly from the disturbed condition of shipping. In the autumn of 1649, the town of Dover presented a remonstrance to the Council of State. They explained that the chief revenue of the harbour was the tonnage on strangers' vessels and the crannage of goods, which, since the war, had yielded little or nothing. The inhabitants had paid to the present Parliament £35,000 in plate, together with various loans, while the charge of the poor to the town amounted to £650 yearly. Various merchants, seamen, and others had left the town through lack of trade, and 200 houses stood empty. Within the last seven years, 50 ships laden with goods and merchandise had been lost.¹⁰⁷ Rye and Winchelsea united in 1642 in representing their grievances to the Council. They pointed out that they were restrained in their trade with the Low Countries and Germany and were prevented from carrying on free trade with London, and were thus unable to support themselves.¹⁰⁸ The loss of fishing and merchant vessels soon became the chief source of complaint. In the summer of 1644, the Mayor and Jurats of Rye informed the Earl of Warwick that a ship belonging to the town, laden with £3,000 worth of goods, had been surprised by one of the King's men-of-war at Weymouth.¹⁰⁹ In the same month, they spoke of "the greate distres that our poore fishermen are now in, because they cannot goe about their callings for feare of being taken by the King's men-of-warre". They have already lost their annual voyage to the Northern seas, and are now afraid to go to Yarmouth for the herring fishing. On these two voyages depend their entire livelihood for the year, and, "their necessities therefore beinge so greate," they have decided to petition Parliament to allow them to have a convoy.¹¹⁰ Again, in October, 1645, the Mayor and Jurats complained of the seizure of their fishing boats, and petitioned for a frigate to lie off their coasts.¹¹¹

While there is not so much evidence of industrial depression in the eastern counties and the Midlands, it would not be true to represent these counties as untouched by the effects of the wars. At some time about 1648, the gentry of Norfolk presented a petition to Sir William Lenthall, declaring that they were wearied by the miseries of civil war, the interruptions in settled government and the imposition of heavy taxes. They spoke of the "generall decay of trade which hath spread itselfe throughout the whole nation and these countyes in particular."¹¹² Passing

to the Midlands, the records of Leicester show clearly that the town felt keenly the burden of financial and military exactions. It was decided in 1642 that the town Chamberlains should take up £100 at interest for three months, the interest being paid by the town, "in regard of the greate and unusuall disbursement of money for this yeare past."¹¹³ A petition to the House of Commons from the Corporation in 1647 shows that, on the orders of Thomas Fairfax, 120 dwelling-houses belonging to poor men were pulled down, and much ground dug up and spoiled. As a result, 120 families who had hitherto lived in the said houses were destitute, and the owners of the houses and grounds impoverished. "The burthen whereof growes so great," say the Corporation, "that your petitioners are not able to beare the same beinge extraordinarily plundred and wasted by the Kinges forces at the takinge of this Towne, and many poore widdowes whose husbands were slayne at the same tyme . . . are very chardgable to your petitioners to provide for and keepe."¹¹⁴

In the North of England, the devastations wrought by the Scots, the Royalists and the Parliamentarians appear to have been considerable.¹¹⁵ An ordinance was passed in August, 1647, for the relief of Chester, which, in addition to its other sufferings, had recently been visited by the plague. It was stated that all who could had left the city, and "there are remaining (for the most Part) only the Poor, that have no Means of Subsistence, being deprived of Trading". Not only the town, but the whole county, was exceedingly impoverished by the late wars, and it was therefore useless to look for relief from their neighbours.¹¹⁶

At the beginning of 1648, the inhabitants of Liverpool petitioned for redress for their losses during the siege, stating that many buildings and gardens had been destroyed, and corn, cattle, and beer seized, to the impoverishment of the inhabitants.¹¹⁷ Later in the year, the Committee of Both Houses wrote to the Committee of the Army that they had received letters from the Governor of Chester, representing the sad condition of that garrison town. Liverpool, too, was "much decayed" as a result of the wars and the loss of its Irish trade, and was unable to bear the burden of free-quarter.¹¹⁸ The increased severity in the treatment of the poor in this town was a symptom of its depressed condition.¹¹⁹

A petition from Lancashire, presented in 1649, describes particularly the condition of Wigan, Ashton, and the

surrounding district. It recounts how these parts have felt the effects of the wars more keenly than any other part of the nation, being devastated both by the Scots' and English armies and by the plague. There is a scarcity of all sorts of provisions, and "all trade (by which they have been much supported) is utterly decayed; it would melt any good heart to see the numerous swarms of begging poor, and the many families that pine away at home, not having faces to beg. Very many now craving alms at other men's doors who were used to give others alms at their doors; to see Paleness, nay Death, appear in the cheeks of the poor, and often to hear of some dead found in their houses or highways for want of bread".¹²⁰ Egerton, writing to the Speaker on the subject of Lancashire, declared that sequestrations did not bring in as much as was expected, since the whole country was extremely exhausted, owing to the plunderings of both sides; and in 1645 the local Committee protested against a new assessment, declaring that the county could bear no more levies.¹²¹ Adam Martindale, the Lancashire diarist, wrote as early as 1641 that "the great trade that my father and two of my brethren had long driven, was quite dead; for who would either build or repaire an house when he could not sleepe a night in it with quiet and safetie?" He went on to speak of his brother's inability to fulfil a certain bargain, since trading was at a standstill and taxes high.¹²² It is probable that, in comparison with the rest of Lancashire, Manchester came off lightly. After 1644, it was the scene of no important military operations, and in 1650 it was described as one of the most flourishing towns in England. Its trade was said to consist mainly in woollen friezes, fustians, sack-cloths, caps, and so on, "whereby not only the better sort of men are employed, but also the very children, by their own labour, can maintain themselves. There are, besides, all kinds of foreign merchandise brought and returned by the merchants of the town, amounting to the sum of many thousands of pounds weekly."¹²³ But, despite its comparative prosperity, Manchester was not without troubles during this time, for in 1645 there was a serious outbreak of the plague, and in the August of that year there were no christenings and in September no marriages "by reason of the sickness being so great". The Committee of Both Kingdoms wrote to ask the Deputy Lieutenants whether, in their opinion, a garrison should be retained any longer, and, if so, how they might be maintained, "in regard to

the decay of trade, and the impoverished condition of the town and parts adjacent." ¹²⁴ An entry in Martindale's diary shows that all markets were discontinued while the plague was at its height. ¹²⁵

From Yorkshire, the Corporation of Pontefract sent a petition to the House of Commons declaring that, since the beginning of the wars, their town had been greatly impoverished and depopulated through the continuance of a garrison in the castle, while over 200 dwelling-houses had been utterly destroyed. They went on to speak of "the incredible decay of trading and commerce, the unavoidable hinderance and interrupcion of Tillage, the total undoing of many well-affecting persons and families", which, taken together, amounted to the total value of £40,000 and more. ¹²⁶ The records of the Corporation of Newcastle-on-Tyne contain numerous indications of the decay of trade in that town. In the autumn of 1641, it was stated that, by reason of the Scots' army lying there for the past year, no gild meetings had been held ¹²⁷; and, at the beginning of the following year, the Mayor and Sheriff offered to cut down their allowances, in view of the town's depressed condition. ¹²⁸ The House of Commons received in 1647 a long and doleful petition from the Mayor and Burgesses. "The prices of Corne and all Victuall are so inhanssed and Tradinge so Deaded," they say, that the town cannot stand the strain of supporting a garrison, even if it were duly paid for its outlay, which, needless to say, it is not. None but tradesmen, merchants, and labouring men are left in the town, "our Great Cole Owners and rich men liveinge abroad and so free themselves of the great Burthens yor petitioners groane under." Unless some attempt is made to relieve them, "the Inhabitants will bee many of them in all likelyhood brought into irrecoverable miserie." ¹²⁹ A year later, the Newcastle Council wrote to the London City Government with reference to "this Corporacion, weh by its unparalleled sufferings is brought very low". ¹³⁰

(II) THE CLOTHING INDUSTRY, 1640-50

The clothing industry suffered unusual hardships during the wars. Dependent as it was upon means of transport, both within and without the country, it felt keenly the effects of the breakdown of communications. It was also more liable to plunder than most industries, and there are numerous

references to the seizure of cloth by the armies, both from merchants in the clothing towns and from carriers on the road. At Wigan, after the entry of the Parliamentary troops in 1643, great heaps of cloth were laid in the streets,¹³¹ and at Bolton it was reported that the soldiers, "being many of them very bare, they caried away aboundance of Cloath of all sortes . . .," some men taking away enough cloth to last their wives and families for many a year.¹³² Sometimes packs of wool were used, like sandbags, to fortify the towns. Thus, the Mayor of Exeter certified that in August, 1643, seventeen packs of wool, valued at £300, belonging to an Exeter merchant, had been taken from his cellar and used for fences and barricades¹³³; and at Bradford sheets of wool were hung on the church steeple.¹³⁴ There also seem to have been organized attempts on the part of the armies to seize supplies of cloth. It was reported in 1645 that the Earl of Northampton had sent out a party of Horse from Banbury to wait for the Gloucestershire clothiers, and, after a successful attack, had taken seventy-two packs of cloth valued at £10,000.¹³⁵ On another occasion, the Committee of Both Kingdoms informed Colonel Massie that the garrison at Winchester Castle had taken cloth from Andover to the value of £10,000,¹³⁶ and in 1644 eighteen packs of cloth were seized at Islip by a Parliamentary captain.¹³⁷

The general condition of the clothing trade is illustrated by a letter sent from Amsterdam in 1642 to J. Beachampe, a London merchant, advising a strictly ca'canny policy in the buying of cloth. "For the cloth Trade at present, I would advise you to write to him wholly, not to buy in a piece at present, although he pretends loosing his Workmen. . . . Therefore, above all excuses as the state stands, write him absolutely not to take off any untill further advises." As to the workmen who will be thrown out of work by this policy, there is little doubt that they will be only too glad to come back again in more settled times.¹³⁸

Both King and Parliament were besieged by petitions which described the terrible condition of the woollen industry. Even before war began, in 1641, the Essex clothiers besought the King to come to their rescue, saying that "the pressing fines that hath befallen your loving subjects, especiall of the Citty of London, in whom the breath of our trade and livelihood consisteth, have so blasted their hopes that the merchants forbear exportation; our cloaths for the most part for the space of this eighteen months remain upon our

hands, and flocks lying dead therein, and we can maintain our trading no longer".¹³⁹ The Berkshire clothiers bewailed the "generall present decay" of the clothing trade, and prophesied "great mischiefs" unless some active measures were taken.¹⁴⁰ The Lords received a complaint from the clothiers of Berkshire, Somerset, Kent, Worcester, Hampshire and Suffolk to the effect that all trade was dead, owing to the impossibility of communication with London, and that the merchants refused to take off their cloth or even to pay the debts which they owed.¹⁴¹ The inhabitants of Tavistock told the Devonshire Justices in 1641 that, owing to pirates at sea and Popery at home, their trade in kersies and other draperies was utterly decayed.¹⁴² In the early months of 1642, the Corporation of Exeter petitioned the Lords, saying that they had received a complaint from the commons of the city and county, "signed by very many Hands, wherein they present the great Decay and Deadness of the Trade of the said City, especially in the manufactures of Serges and Perpetuanyet."¹⁴³ At the end of the same year, the Commons noted that Sir Ralph Hopton's rebellion in the West had wholly destroyed the manufacture of the new draperies in those parts.¹⁴⁴

These petitions were far from being mere groundless complaints. In 1642, Mr. Grimston described the terrible condition of the clothing trade in Essex and Kent,¹⁴⁵ and in 1643 the King attempted to alleviate the situation. He stated that he had been informed that many clothiers, travelling from the West and other parts to London, had been arrested and their goods confiscated. If these deprivations were allowed to continue, trade would decay and many poor people be thrown out of work; and the King therefore ordered that no one coming up to London with his goods was to suffer interference.¹⁴⁶ On another occasion, the King recommended the business of clothing to the care of both Houses, saying that he had received a "modest but earnest" petition from the Suffolk clothiers.¹⁴⁷

The clothing industry in the Northern counties suffered from particularly acute depression, owing partly to the devastation of the Scots', Royalist and Parliamentary armies, and partly to the vexed question of regulation, which was a greater problem here than elsewhere. In 1644, Mr. Sandys wrote to the Governor of Scarborough of the difficulties and dangers under which northern traders laboured. They had to run the risk of falling in with the Dutch or the

Parliamentary ships, and for this reason no man would insure them.¹⁴⁸ The divided allegiance of the Yorkshire towns was an additional cause of trouble. When the war began, Wakefield and Leeds were in the hands of Royalist troops, while Bradford and Halifax were under a Parliamentary garrison. This division was fatal to trade, since the four towns were closely interdependent, Wakefield being a market for kerseys and wool, and Leeds a finishing centre. Also, Wakefield was in a position to block the road to the London markets, and could prevent cloth from going south and wool from going north to Leeds.¹⁴⁹ The clothiers of Bradford and Halifax urged Sir Thomas Fairfax to take some decisive action,¹⁵⁰ and, perhaps partly as a result of their representations, Leeds was soon after captured by the Parliament. This event must have appeared to the Leeds clothiers in the light of a doubtful blessing, for, on Fairfax's orders, many of them burnt down their houses as a precautionary measure. In the summer of 1647, the Commons received two petitions from Yorkshire clothiers. The first complained of this destruction and the consequent loss of all property and possessions. They have now sought redress for nine months, the clothiers say, but have gained no relief, being obliged to beg their bread from strangers, whilst their children are left homeless.¹⁵¹ The second petition was from a Bradford clothier, who declared that, during the war, his house was burnt down, his woolsacks used as a means of defence against the enemy's cannon, and the rest of his goods plundered.¹⁵²

An additional reason for the depression which overtook the Yorkshire industry was the injury inflicted by the plague, which seems to have been unusually virulent in those parts. In 1640-1 an outbreak of plague swept over the West Riding, and in January, 1641, the Wakefield justices declared that "by occasion of the heavye visitation with which itt hath pleased God to visitt the inhabitants of Dewesbury . . . the trade and commerce of those inhabitants are soe muche decayed and the poor soe exceedinglie encreased . . . that about two hundreth seaventie and odd persons . . . are to receive weekly allowance and relief".¹⁵³ Four years later, Leeds was visited by a severe outbreak of plague. It is estimated that over 1,300 inhabitants died, and the weekly markets were discontinued.¹⁵⁴

Various petitions illustrate the distress which the clothiers suffered. In 1642, the Leeds clothiers told the King that,

while they were very poor before the war began, now they were near the end of their resources, since "Merchants fearing what ill vent may ensue upon these distractions, doe not take up our cloaths as they use to doe, but our stocks lye dead in our own hands . . ." ¹⁵⁵ At another time, the gentry, ministers and freemen of York reminded the King that the armies were an immense burden upon the county. Clothing, its staple industry, had been almost ruined, "insomuch that many thousands of families who are of and have their livelihood by the Trade of Cloathing, are now at the point of utter undoing, . . . it beeing too true that very many in these and other parts of the Kingdome doe wholly withdraw themselves from their former Commerce and Dealings, and others, both Merchants and Chapmen, doe now generally refuse to make payment for goods long since sold and delivered, alledging that others refuse to pay them for any Commodity formerly sold, till the fears and distractions of the land be settled." ¹⁵⁶ In 1646, the Commons received a petition from the Yorkshire clothiers and makers of broadcloth, and from the "well-affected" in the parish of Leeds, which they referred to the Committee for the Northern Association. ¹⁵⁷

The judgment of well-informed contemporary observers coincides with the evidence of petitions and local records in pointing to a serious decline in the clothing trade from 1640 to 1650. Thomas Violet, reporting in 1650 to the Committee for the Mint, said that "our golden fleece, which is our Indies, was devoured by the rapine of the soldiers, and great quantities of the remainder transported to our industrious neighbours, the Netherlanders. . . . Our clothiers and workmen were by continual losses discouraged, and many of them forced to take up arms, or to forsake their dwellings, and even their native country, and to set up their trades in foreign ports." ¹⁵⁸ R. Bradshaw, writing from Hamburg in 1656, noted as one of the chief causes of the decay of the clothing trade the fact that large numbers of cloth-workers, weavers, dyers, "cottons," and "pressers" had migrated to Holland and Germany during the war, and not yet returned. These men had done so much to advance the clothing trade in their adopted countries that, during the last year, twice as much cloth had been exported from Silesia to Hamburg as from England. ¹⁵⁹ Bischoff, writing in 1842, agrees with the statements of Violet and Bradshaw. He says that, during the wars, England was unable to supply the Sound with woollens, and so the Dutch gained an entry into that trade,

while the Poles and Silesians, acting on the spur of necessity, set up their own woollen manufactures. The English Government, says Bischoff, was told of a "prodigious woollen manufactory" at Frawstad and Lissa, in the upper district of Poland, near the borders of Silesia. Moreover, it was reported that 220,000 cloths were made yearly in the neighbourhood of Danzig, and rumour declared that the Duke of Brandenburg had bespoken 100,000 ells of Silesian cloth for his troops, instead of the English goods which he was accustomed to buy.¹⁶⁰

It is possible that this long tale of petitions and complaints may give a too gloomy picture of the state of the clothing trade during the decade 1640-50, for, while there can be little doubt that the trade underwent a bad period of depression, it was by no means at a standstill. Thomas Priestley, a Yorkshire clothier, is said by his brother to have travelled to London with eight or nine horses during the entire war period. "Sometimes he and others that was with him hired convoys, and sometimes went without, and were never taken, he or his horses or goods, all that dangerous time."¹⁶¹ In the letter-book of Abel Barker of Hambleton, Rutlandshire, there are several references to traffic in cloth during these years. Thus, in 1642 he mentions 530 "todds" of wool, valued at £530, which he has sold.¹⁶² Again in 1648, he writes to two correspondents at Coggeshall that 150 todds of wool are on the road to them and that there are 200 more to come. Another letter states that he has sent off another 75 todds to be followed by 50 more, making in all 200 todds to be paid for at the rate of 20s. per todd.¹⁶³*

(III) THE STATE OF AGRICULTURE, 1640-50

Agriculture, no less than industry, was hard hit by the outbreak of the war, and during this period reports come from every part of England of the irreparable damage wrought by the armies, of falling rents and deserted lands. Among the manuscripts of the Duke of Somerset, there is a statement of the damage done by the King's army, during one year, to E. Parker, of Boringdon in Devon. The sum total is £2,458, and the damage consists mainly in corn and stock taken by

* It is likely, too, that foreign trade was not so seriously affected during this period as home industry. As a result of his investigations into the history of the Levant Company, Mr. G. Ambrose states that their trade received little disturbance between 1642-6, and that during the whole of the Interregnum there was no serious decline in its volume, although damage was inflicted by pirates and by the Dutch.

the armies.¹⁶⁴ A correspondent of Thomas Harley's estimates his father's losses at £12,000 or £13,000, not including the damage done to his woods.¹⁶⁵ A certificate addressed to the Justices of the Peace swears to the great losses sustained by the Popham family in goods and cattle, amounting in all to "[blank] hundred and three score and fifteen pounds".¹⁶⁶ On a smaller scale, comes Sir William Armagne, of Osgodby in Lincolnshire, whose sheep and cattle were plundered, and whose tenants were taken prisoners, the total damage amounting to at least £500.¹⁶⁷

By the frequent complaints of decreased rents and deserted land, it is clear that the tenants shared their landlords' misfortunes. A letter written in 1647 from the Earl of Strafford to Sir George Wentworth draws attention to a book of accounts, in which, during the last half-year, arrears for rents amounted to £8,887, "and likewise," says the writer, "much land given up; so that I shall desire your advice if to allow a year's rent to poor tenants . . ." ¹⁶⁸ In 1645, the Earl of Stamford petitioned for £2,000 out of delinquents' estates, declaring that the Royalists had so impoverished his tenants by their continual plunderings, that he could no longer obtain any rents from his lands.¹⁶⁹ The Reading Corporation was besieged by petitions from its tenants, stating their inability to pay their rents. A letter to the Town Clerk states that the petitioner cannot pay the rent for his farm, which is 3 yardlands. "We cannot enjoy our land we rent of you," he says, "because the armies of both sides lie so nere us, consumeing the profits of our grounds. Besides taxes are so hard, we are not able to pay them; ther is but threescore and eight yardlands within the parish, which comes to, at £10 a yard land, £680 a year, and the taxes that are laid on us by both armies are above £1,200 a year, besides quartering with us." ¹⁷⁰ A certain John Page and Richard Winch petitioned the Corporation, once in 1645 and twice in 1646, for an abatement of their rents, and on the second occasion it was agreed that a fourth part should be abated, "in regard of their extraordinary sufferinges." ¹⁷¹ A letter from Rutlandshire states that, if the wars continue, landlords will have to give up hope of collecting their rents.¹⁷² Those counties where agriculture was not seriously interrupted by the ravages of the armies were faced with the difficulty of insufficient man-power. R. Duckenfield, writing from Stockport to Sir Thomas Fairfax in 1644, says he has tried in vain to get his soldiers into fit order for active service, "but they have disbanded

themselves, and are following the plough, and from thence they will not be drawn." ¹⁷³ In July, 1644, the Staffordshire Grand Jury presented a petition to the Justices, complaining that all their men were drawn away, and that, in consequence, there would be no one to get in the hay and harvest. They asked that the men might be speedily recalled.¹⁷⁴ During the same month, the Committee of Both Kingdoms informed Sir Thomas Honeywood that, since the trained bands under his command could not be spared long from their employments, especially at harvest time, permission was given for the men to return.¹⁷⁵ Major-General Browne was also told by the Committee that the men of Essex and Hertfordshire might go back to their counties, "considering the necessity of their attendance upon their harvest." ¹⁷⁶

Once again, the Northern counties seem to have suffered more keenly than most other parts of the country. Sir George Vane, writing from Durham to Sir Henry Vane, says that "our county is in a miserable plunge and at a stand what to do . . ." Many of his father's tenants threaten to give up their leases, and throw the land on his hands, declaring that unless rents are substantially abated it is impossible for them to carry on any longer.¹⁷⁷ The Royalist Composition Papers for the County of Durham tell the same tale of falling rents and decaying estates everywhere. Thus, the two mills of Wolviston and Wynyard only brought in a rent of £28 in 1644, while a few years earlier they had returned £42. A typical entry is that under Kelloc, where the tenants of one holding offered £60 rent instead of the usual £116, and showed expenditure in billeting and assessments which exceeded the previous year's rent.¹⁷⁸ The County Committee reported in 1647 to the Central Committee in London that the county was so much exhausted with the exactions of the armies that it was fair to say that its sufferings were worse than those of any other county.¹⁷⁹ In 1641, a petition was presented on behalf of Durham and Northumberland to the Commissioners of the Scots' armies. It pointed out that the army had been in the neighbourhood for six months, and that the inhabitants were greatly impoverished by its exactions. They had sold their cattle at a loss in order to pay contributions to the armies, and their hay had been commandeered for the cavalry's horses. Now they were unable either to till their lands or work their collieries. Many inhabitants, it was stated, had already been compelled to leave, and the counties were quickly becoming depopulated.¹⁸⁰ In 1647, Major-General Skippon spoke of the country near Newcastle as

being "much impoverished",¹⁸¹ and Captain Ogle asked to be exempted from his composition on the grounds that Northumberland, where his estates lay, was in a wretched condition.¹⁸² The report made to the Earl of Northumberland of the losses sustained on his estate is unusually interesting. By arrears in rents for five years he is calculated to have lost £37,984, and his losses in houses, woods and collieries amount to £4,570. Moreover, the report declares that the losses of the Earl's tenants in stock and money amount to much more than the losses mentioned above, and that, even if only half rents are charged, it will be difficult to collect them for some time to come.¹⁸³ In 1644, Sir Lionel Maddison wrote from Newcastle to Sir H. Vane, "For the country to subsist and maintain the army, except some speedy relief be, for any time, is impossible; that they have done so much is hardly credible." Many of the tenants are likely to forsake their lands, "though some have been desired only to stay upon the ground and but keep fire in the houses that they fall not to ruin."¹⁸⁴

In Yorkshire, the condition of agriculture was equally bad, if not worse. Brian Middleton, writing to Sir William Sheffield in 1643, declares that no rents have been received, nor is there much hope of receiving any for some time. "If God relieve not speedily, this country is wasted by plunderings, pillaging, robbing in the highways, and common charges, so as you are not to expect moneys from hence, till these storms be over."¹⁸⁵ The inhabitants of Thornaby, in the North Riding, complained to the Council that their meadows were being devoured by the horses belonging to the garrison at Stockton Castle, and that the soldiers were pillaging their goods.¹⁸⁶ Sir Thomas Mauleverer, writing from York in 1645 to William Lenthall, declared that, through the protracted occupation of the Scots' army, "the life-blood of the poor countryman's estate is now drawing out . . ."¹⁸⁷ Some years later, a petition from the East Riding bewailed the heavy burden caused by the army assessments, and insisted that the tenants had thereby been reduced to a condition "worse than the sometime slaves of this Nation; for though the Lords had their Labour, they found them with meat, drink, cloathing and lodging".¹⁸⁸

Among the correspondence of the Fairfax family are papers which throw further light on the condition of agriculture in the north. Ranulphe Crewe, writing to the King's agent at Paris, says: "If you saw the counties—how devastated, how impoverished, how defaced—it would

grieve you . . . I myself receive nothing of my revenue and have been plundered to a great value.”¹⁸⁹ Lord Mulgrave desired Fairfax to consider the case of his tenants at Mulgrave and Seaton, whose condition was so wretched that they were totally disabled from paying any rents.¹⁹⁰ A letter from T. Ibsen, the steward of young Lord Fairfax of Ernely, is unusually illuminating. He begins by explaining how he has gone round to the tenants of the various manors to demand payment of arrears, and has been met everywhere by the same story that, through the exactions of the armies, they are so much impoverished that it is impossible for them to pay anything. The tenants of Ancaster Malbys had petitioned the Parliamentary Commissioners for relief, having suffered £2,000 worth of damage from the Scots. It was decided that they should have their assessments abated, last year’s rent wholly taken off, and only pay half rent in future. “My lord, this lordship was almost a fourth part of your estate, and, notwithstanding all these abatements, I have not gotten out of it £40, and I have ridden five times for that. And for all your other tenants, the gentlemen [commissioners] did order that they should have all assessments abated, and for the time to come have a third part of their rents abated, until the times were better. My lord, this eats off a great part of your revenue, and yet I fear the tenants are so impoverished, that they will scarce be able to pay what is set down.” Turning to other estates, Skalton, Ampleford, Gillenge and Colton lay so near to Holmesby Castle that when it was besieged the inhabitants were never rid of plundering soldiers. Walton was plundered at Newcastle’s first coming, and, since then, the Scots have been there three times, and at their last coming took all the grain and left only three sheep. From Radston no rent has been taken these last four years, and at Skawton there are lands of £70 yearly value, which were deserted about two years ago by the tenants. At Walton, also, depopulation has begun, a considerable amount of arable land and meadow land to the value of £80 a year being thrown on the landlord’s hands.¹⁹¹ The composition papers of the Yorkshire Royalists bear out these general complaints of reduced rents. Thus, land belonging to Thomas Jackson had fallen from £136 yearly rent to £80 in 1646,¹⁹² while Sir Richard Tankerd’s lands had dropped from £240 to £181.¹⁹³ Mr. Hodgson’s lands in Bieston fell from £240 to £160, and his lands in Seacroft from £27 to £13.¹⁹⁴ The particulars of Richard Sykes’

estate show that in every case values had decreased by about one-third.¹⁹⁵

(IV) THE PERIOD OF FLUCTUATION, 1650-60

For the period 1640-50 there is considerable evidence as to economic conditions, and it all points in the same general direction. The history of the years between 1650-60 is less homogeneous, and the materials for it are not nearly so plentiful. While the decade was far from being prosperous, the extreme sufferings of the war years were over, and during much of the time there is comparatively little to be gathered from petitions and local histories.

There is little doubt that, about 1650, there were signs of a revival in trade and industry. The Parliament had vindicated its cause in England, Scotland and Ireland, and had not yet embarked upon the troubled seas of foreign aggression. Henry Robinson, one of the most prolific economic writers of the time,¹⁹⁶ expressed a widespread sentiment when he declared in 1649 that, after having wrestled for seven years for conscience sake, it was now "high time to think upon securing of the Nation, as touching civil Immunities, . . . to establish a flourishing Trade, both Inland and Foreign, whereby Navigation may be continued and advanced," and a way found for everyone to earn a decent livelihood.¹⁹⁷ In 1650, the East India Company offered £300,000 capital for subscription, and, though the whole amount was not taken up, the very fact that it was offered indicates an improvement in the situation. Considerable land speculation was taking place, and in January, 1652, fee-farm rents to the value of £273,000 had been sold. The customs revenue rose to £350,000, a sum which nearly equalled that reached before the wars.¹⁹⁸

It was generally recognized that the new Government must show its superiority to the old by improving the state of trade. In speaking of the various grievances which had aroused opposition to Charles, Pym had put trade second only to religion,¹⁹⁹ and the apologists of the new régime tried to prove that an increase of trade would follow inevitably on the overthrow of arbitrary government. A pamphlet, which purported to be a *Declaration of the Parliament of England*, pointed out that since Holland had obtained a free constitution, its wealth and prestige had increased by leaps and bounds. Under a monarchy, self-indulgence and

personal government prevented the free growth of industry, but now "projects, Monopolies and obstructions thereof are together with the Court the fountain of them removed; and a Free Trade with encouragement of Manufactures and provision for the poor, will be settled by the Commonwealth." ²⁰⁰

The Government and its advisers displayed considerable activity in formulating proposals for the advancement and regulation of trade. The author of the *Annals of Commerce* says of this period, "The English commonwealth testifying a great inclination for the advancement of commerce, we find in this and some following years, abundance of printed projects for promoting particular branches thereof. . . . Most of those projects, after the restoration of Charles II, and some after the accession of William III, were again proposed to the public, with some variation in their form. . ." ²⁰¹ It was at this time that the Government passed an Act for "advancing and regulating the trade of the commonwealth", and made an effort to determine the root causes of the industrial and commercial depression. ²⁰² One of the most interesting proposals put before the Government was that for re-establishing public exchanges and setting up a Bank. Henry Robinson informed the Council that a Bank would not only perform the negative function of preventing those abuses which arose through private exchange, but would "furnish stocks for all manner of Trade or undertaking, bee it the Grand Fishing Employment, East and West India traffick, or any new discovery or plantation". ²⁰³ S. Lamb, a London merchant, made proposals to Cromwell for the foundation of a Bank composed of representatives from the mercantile Companies of London. ²⁰⁴ S. Chappel, a Devonshire merchant, suggested that all money invested in the Bank should be free from forfeitures and taxes, and should bring in at least 5 per cent interest. ²⁰⁵

The various schemes for establishing a thriving fishing trade, which would rival that of the Dutch, probably made a more popular appeal. A pamphleteer of 1653 dwelt on the richness of the seas which surrounded Britain, for, besides the fisheries on which the Hollander had encroached, there were "between the Commonwealth's territories of England, Scotland and Ireland, hake, cod, ling, herring, pilchers and conger, a plentiful blessing of God, and no great profit raised unto this Commonwealth for that there is not any effectual way pursued for taking and saving the said fish". The only

obstacle in the way was the Hollander, who had repeatedly rejected our attempts at peaceful compromise and now deserved rougher treatment.²⁰⁶ In 1649, a party of foreign Protestants drew up a scheme for the revival of the fishing trade, and the plantation of an English colony in the southern part of the world.²⁰⁷ Other colonial projects were mooted, and one writer pointed out that the undeveloped continents of Asia, America and Africa were an obvious field for the expansion of English trade.²⁰⁸

Even during this period of comparative recuperation, however, trade was carried on under difficulties. During the spring and summer of 1650, there were continual complaints of the depredations of pirates and enemies and requests for adequate convoys,²⁰⁹ and in May, 1650, the Council declared that, having received statements of the damage done to merchant ships, it was of opinion that the heads of the various great trading companies, and the merchants trading to Italy, France, Spain, Portugal, Guinea and Barbadoes, should confer together and devise some means by which this danger might be prevented.²¹⁰ In March, 1653, a petition was presented to the Council on behalf of the Merchant Adventurers trading to Hamburg. It stated that, for the last year, the petitioners had not dared to send a ship to Hamburg because of the dangers to be met with at sea, and were now in such extremities that, unless a convoy was provided, it would be impossible for them to buy up any more goods from the clothiers. The merchants declared that it was not only private interest which urged them to speak, for experience had shown that the interruptions in English trade had given impetus to the clothing industry in Germany.²¹¹ From a later entry in the State papers, it seems that their request for a convoy was granted.²¹²

In the autumn of 1650, a report was issued from the Council of State that, within the last 21 months, there had been taken by the French alone over 500,000 tons of shipping, with over 400 pieces of ordnance, and goods to the value of £500,000 from merchants trading to the Levant. It was therefore decided that, "This Council also perceiving that the Trading of those Parts, heretofore very rich, and almost wholly driven in our English shipping, is by means of the Discouragements forementioned now near quite lost to this Nation," a convoy should be sent with each group of four ships or more.²¹³ A few months later, a report from the Committee for Trade stated that the importation of

bullion was hindered by the merchants' fear of dangers at sea.²¹⁴

Letters and expressions of opinion from individual merchants and others indicate the same attempt to revive trade under considerable difficulties. An English trader, writing in the spring of 1651 to his chief at Rotterdam, says: "Though I have had a hard task to act here in our trade, in respect of the dangers of the times, yet I still hold my head above water. The time for quick markets draws now on towards the spring; notwithstanding daily interruptions of our letters and commodities, I make shift to hold up our credit upon the exchange."²¹⁵ Edward Ashe, in a letter to Colonel Popham, remarked that, "Our trade is at present very small, if we cannot get convoy the trade will be lost, for the Dutch have convoys to supply their markets daily."²¹⁶ At the beginning of 1653, the Bailiffs of Great Yarmouth wrote to General Monk that, after a meeting of the Common Council, they had found that the town had lost £200,000 in the late wars, whereby poverty had been greatly increased, some persons paying as much as 8s. or 10s. weekly towards the relief of the poor. Since the revenue of the town consisted mainly in duties paid by fishing boats and other vessels, there seemed at present little hope that it would be given a chance to recuperate. Not three boats were now ready to set forth, where formerly there used to be 150.²¹⁷

It is obvious that the economic revival of 1650 was more in the nature of a promise than a performance. And, before this promise could bear fruit, it was rudely broken by the Government's failure to pursue a steady policy of reconstruction. The foreign policy of the Commonwealth and the Protectorate was spirited, but, from an economic point of view, disastrous. It was the attempt of a half-starved man to dominate his neighbours when he ought to have been filling his own stomach. The Dutch war of 1652 may have been inevitable, but the only concrete advantage which England gained from it was the right to enforce the Navigation Act. It is even doubtful if the administration of this measure was an unmixed blessing. The decline of English shipping after 1640 was a natural consequence of the Civil Wars. English ships were liable to attack by Royalists and pirates alike, and the premium for marine insurance advanced by 400 per cent.²¹⁸ It was therefore inevitable that merchants who had any choice in the matter should hesitate to entrust their goods to English ships. The

Navigation Act was an attempt to remedy by artificial means one of the effects of the general dislocation of trade, and its immediate result was merely to cause further disorder.²¹⁹ R. Coke, writing in 1697, remarked that Parliament had passed the Navigation Act, "designing thereby to have, in a great measure, lessened the Dutch Trade, and encreased the English; though both succeeded quite contrary." According to Coke, Parliament should have fought the Dutch with their own weapons, and made English ports free for the importation of all ship-building materials, "so as we might have had the Materials as cheap as the Dutch."²²⁰ This opinion receives some endorsement from contemporary petitions. In 1652, the Committee for Foreign Affairs promised those merchants who dealt in Eastland commodities that they should be free from confiscations under the Act,²²¹ and the Newcastle Merchant Adventurers complained that it was having a disastrous effect on their trade.²²² In 1658, a petition was presented to the Council of State by the commanders of ships in and near London. They declared that the Navigation Act had been so widely evaded that it was worse than useless, and that the bulk of our trade was carried on by foreigners in foreign-built ships.²²³

Although the effects on trade of the Dutch war do not seem to have been nearly so serious as those of the Spanish war, it seems clear that it did not increase the country's prosperity. At a meeting of the Newcastle Common Council in August, 1653, it was stated that the Corporation had been put to large expenses, partly by reason of the late wars and partly because "by ye late stopp of Trade occasioned by our Warr with the Hollands, the Revenew of this towne is much abated insomuch that it will not defray the present necessary and unavoidable charge incident hereunto . . ."²²⁴ J. Waynwright, of London, writing to Bradshaw at Hamburg in May, 1654, said: "I never knew such a spring, as to a bad inland trade, since I came to London, but there is cause for it; as to England, the taxes suck up the ready money and corn and cattle so plentiful yield nothing . . ."²²⁵ An entry in Burton's *Diary* for 1654 tells how "the countries are, generally, exhausted of all the monies. Men are forced to mortgage their lands, and to sell, in some places, their very beds from under them, to pay the taxes; and the cheapness of commodities is not so much from the plenty as from the scarcity of money, which is drained so continually from

the country by their monthly taxes, as it never returns again in such plenty".²²⁶ In 1655, the public debt amounted to £781,345, and in 1657 it was described as "insuperable"; the public faith on which loans had been raised being no better than the "public despair". The army was reported to be going barefoot in winter, and both it and the navy were clamouring for arrears of pay.²²⁷

While the Dutch war may have had some economic and political justification, the Spanish expedition was rashly conceived, and was fraught with disaster. From a financial point of view, it was extremely unwise for an impoverished Government to undertake further liabilities, and M. de Bordeaux, writing from London to France, speaks of the difficulty which was experienced in persuading Parliament to vote supplies.²²⁸ His opinion is borne out by the account of a contemporary news letter, which records how, in November, 1656, it was moved in the House that the assessments should be increased, "there being no other wayes to rayse money to carry on the charge of the Spanish warre (which is estimated by a Committee to neare a million per annum)." The House, however, rejected the motion, suggesting instead that the customs and excise should be raised.²²⁹ In June of the following year, two Acts were passed, one for advancing the receipts of the excise and the other appointing thirty-seven Commissioners with power to contract for farming the customs and excise. Merchants were strongly opposed to this increase in the customs, and one of them warned Parliament that the revenue would fail altogether if this policy were pushed further. "I may compare it to a cow," he says, "that may give a great deal of milk if she be well fed and tenderly used and none offer violence to her lest she hold up her milk."²³⁰ A letter written in June, 1657, stated that the merchants, and indeed all City men, were highly indignant at the action of Parliament, "for by the Acts they have made they have raised yet more and more the customs and excise of almost all commodities, to the destruction of trade."²³¹

R. Coke's denunciation of the Spanish wars was sweeping. "Cromwell," he says, "who expected Mountains of Gold . . . contracted such a Debt by this Expedition that by all his Tricks he could never after overcome;" and if the Government suffered for its rashness, still greater were the hardships imposed on individual merchants, who contracted far greater losses in these wars than in the struggle against the Dutch.²³²

Coke's account is borne out by the complaints of the merchants trading to Spain. They declared in 1655 that their trade was absolutely essential to the well-being of the country's industry, for, while Spain bought large quantities of English manufactured goods, we received wool and bullion in return. "It imployeth the poor throughout the whole commonwealth, and infinite of the middle rank of people in making and managing manufactures, by which riches are distributed to all; . . . it multiplies out shipping and mariners, which are the walls and bulwarks of this island."²³³ A letter written in the autumn of 1655 declared that the Spaniard had not only made an embargo, but a seizure of all our merchants' estates, goods, books, and counting-houses in Spain, and that thereupon an application for redress had been made to Cromwell by our Spanish merchants.²³⁴ A certain G. Cony, whose sole trade was with Spain, complained to the Protector that by reason of the sudden breach with that country he was likely to be ruined.²³⁵ It was significant that the merchants formerly engaged in trade with Spain were said to be the leaders of an intrigue with Charles Stuart in 1656.²³⁶

The effects of the Spanish war and the subsequent European entanglements were not confined to the merchants who traded directly with Spain. The Mayor, Jurats and shipowners of Hastings, Rye and other parts of Sussex told the Protector that, since the breach with Spain, their coasts had been infested with Ostenders and Dunkirkers, who seized merchant vessels and fishing boats.²³⁷ At the beginning of 1656, the Admiralty Commissioners were informed that the Dunkirkers and Ostenders were growing numerous, and during the last fifteen days had taken two ships from Lyme, one of them being richly laden with linen. The informant added that a general complaint was abroad among merchants and seamen that they had no adequate protection from the state, but were left a prey to every rogue.²³⁸ A letter sent from London about this time reported that many ships had been lost both to the Dunkirkers, and in the Straits of Gibraltar and the Bay of Biscay. As a result, "the Merchants hang down the head, having lately had great losses."²³⁹ Major Burton was roused to impatience with the Admiralty Commissioners. "You write that you do as much as you are able," he said, "but if speedy course is not taken we shall be a prey to the enemy . . . If the State wante money to carry on the works, and £60,000 a month will not do, £120,000 must. The Hollanders say that the English are

asleep, and that nearly seventy English sail lie there without convoy.”²⁴⁰ Again, in the summer of 1656, Burton wrote from Yarmouth that there were 300 or 400 sail of the coal fleet abroad and scarcely anyone to guard them.²⁴⁰ The inhabitants of Yarmouth, Wells, Southwold and Aldborough declared that thirty-five fishing boats, valued at £25,000, had set out for Iceland and were in danger of being captured, to the utter ruin of 500 men and their wives and families, “which will cause the greater want by reason of the interruption which the war has brought on the North Sea fishing, one-third of about seventy fishers being already taken.”²⁴² From King’s Lynn came a petition that, since they supplied the north with corn and the other counties with coal and salt, their merchants might be provided with a convoy.²⁴³ When petitioning on behalf of Hull for a convoy, Major Elton declared that some of the Dunkirkers and Ostenders had sent a message to tell the Protector that while he was fetching gold from the Indies they would fetch his coal from Newcastle.²⁴⁴ The reaction on industry of such hold-ups of merchant ships is illustrated by a petition in 1652 from the Coggeshall clothiers. They say that many thousands of poor people are employed in making Coggeshall bays for exportation, but, through the scarcity of convoys, merchants will not venture forth in these troublous times, and for six months the clothiers have had no sales.²⁴⁵ A pamphleteer of 1668 declared that by the Spanish war Cromwell threw away all hope of industrial and commercial recovery, “as if the Lord had infatuated and deprived him of common sense and reason.”²⁴⁶

During the years 1657 and 1658 matters seem to have gone from bad to worse, and the way was prepared for the final catastrophe of 1659-60. A foreign correspondent declared at the beginning of 1658 that the trade of the west coast of England had been almost ruined since the beginning of the Spanish wars, Bristol alone having lost 250 sail.²⁴⁷ Mr. Downing wrote to Thurloe from the Hague that he was deeply perplexed and troubled by the cries of poor English seamen, whose ships were seized and their goods unladen and sold. “And the truth is, this is as bad as the worm in the West Indies to the shipping and navigation of England, and will certainly, in a short time, if not prevented, be the destruction thereof.”²⁴⁸ Towards the end of 1658, Thurloe received a letter from St. John on the same subject. St. John remarked that he had been told that almost all merchants

were beginning to trade in Dutch ships, and "the consequence, you know, will be noe lesse, then that in a shorte time we shall have noe ships of our owne; and of the transportation of woolls".²⁴⁹ A London letter-writer reported at the beginning of 1658 that, when the Protector sent for the Lord Mayor to borrow a certain sum from the City, the Mayor replied that, "they were forced to go from door to door to beg contributions for the relief of their poor, which were more than ever; and many families that formerly had good handicraft trades, and lived very well, and now for want of work were ready to famish for want of bread; and this is too true a story . . ." ²⁵⁰ Other towns shared London's opinion on the economic situation. At a meeting of the Bristol Council in the autumn of 1657, certain parishes which had been ordered to contribute to the relief of Temple Parish asked to be spared the burden, owing to the weight of their own charges "in these dead times".²⁵¹ A year later, it was ordered that, in consequence of the destitution prevailing among the widows and children of Bristol sailors killed in the wars with Spain and Holland, the parochial rates for relief of the poor should be doubled.²⁵² A petition from the Essex and Suffolk clothiers, and others, declared that they had not grudged their various loans to Parliament, "but by the continued distraction by wars at sea, Trading hath been so obstructed, and your petitioners disabled by the Non-payment of Debts . . . that it hath occasioned the undoing of thousands of persons, and whole families of your petitioners." ²⁵³

During the last year of the Interregnum, industry entered upon its final stage of depression. The glimmer of hope which had illuminated the war-time epoch was lacking, and the sun of the Commonwealth sunk beneath a black horizon. Mr. Barwick, writing from London to Sir Edward Hyde at the beginning of 1659, declared that, "there was never greater complaints in the city for want both of trading and money, and that they are reall appears by the falling of house-rent in the city ten per cent." ²⁵⁴ A month or two later, Barwick wrote that the merchants were still complaining and that the public debt amounted to about two and a half million, "and the excise is petitioned against in severall particulars by severall trades, and would be by more if their petitions could be heard." ²⁵⁵ Secretary Nicholas, in a series of letters, emphasized the increasing distress which had overtaken the country. In July, 1659, he wrote that the

Parliament were in great arrears for money and at their wits' end how to raise it, "the people being so discontented."²⁵⁶ In August, he wrote that there were great disorders in England, the people in London and elsewhere being inclined to riot. Already it was said that no hopes of recovery could be entertained till the King was restored.²⁵⁷ During November, he reported that the distractions continued "very high, all sorts of people being discontented", and the merchants, especially, fearing that the soldiers would wreck all chances of peace.²⁵⁸ Complaints of renewed military burdens arose from Gloucester and Rye. The Mayor and Aldermen of Gloucester recalled their sufferings during the Civil Wars, the continual burdens since, and now complained of the provision of arms, advancing of money and quartering of soldiers inflicted upon them.²⁵⁹ The Mayor and Jurats of Rye informed Colonel Gibbon that two of his companies of foot soldiers had been quartered upon them for a year, to the great discouragement of trade. They begged that the soldiers might be removed, "otherwise the people here are so poore and the trading so much decayed, that we are not able to subsist, but must as many already speake, leave the Towne and seeke a livelyhood elsewhere . . ."²⁶⁰ The Bristol Corporation declared in 1659 that great distress prevailed among the lower classes, owing to the high rate of provisions. In January, 1659, having considered "the manifold and extraordinary necessities of the poor", it resolved that door to door collection should be made for their relief.²⁶⁰

In 1659, a series of remonstrances and petitions was presented to the Government from London and the counties, bewailing the utter deadness of trade. The London apprentices declared that trade was so much diminished, "that we know no fitter Heroglyphi of it then those seven Pharaoh's lean kine; since these seven years last past have almost devoured the Wealth and Credit that the City had for seven hundred years before." Trade with foreign nations has completely ceased, for Spain hates us, France slights us, and the Dutch betray us. "And how can we reasonably expect that abroad which we cannot promise to ourselves at home? . . . What will be the issue? . . . There is only one expedient to recover our Religion, Laws and Trade, that is a returning to the condition and State of Affairs where we began . . ."²⁶² Another petition spoke of the "very much decayed Trade of this Nation",²⁶³ and the City made a final

desperate appeal for redress, "after the Loss of Trade and Liberty, a vast expense of Blood and Treasure . . ." ²⁶⁴ John Hill, a London merchant, told the Council that trade in the London market was at a standstill.²⁶⁵

Still more impressive was the long roll of petitions from the counties; Norfolk, Suffolk, Lincoln, Salop, Yorkshire, Staffordshire, Devon, Kent, Warwickshire, and Cheshire being among those who swelled the chorus. The ministers, freeholders and seamen of Suffolk presented a petition to the London City Government, declaring that it was superfluous to speak of "your Merchandise decayed, your Trade declined, your Estates withered".²⁶⁶ General Monk received a letter from the gentry of Lincolnshire which dwelt upon the "sad Consequents of an Intestine War . . . all which of Late years Ruined our Trade, and Impoverished the whole Nation . . ." ²⁶⁷ A letter from the gentry of Norfolk and Norwich spoke of "the loud out-cries of multitudes of undone and almost famished people, occasioned by a generall decay of Trade, which hath spread itself throughout the whole Nation, and these Counties in particular".²⁶⁸ The Devonshire gentry declared that they had held a meeting of quarter sessions to consider the bad state of the country and the remedies which might be taken. "We find divers of the Inhabitants groaning under high Oppressions, and a generall defect of Trade, to the utter ruine of many, and fear of the like to others . . ." ²⁶⁹ In Kent, the commonalty joined with the nobility, gentry and ministers to bewail "the loud and heartpiercing cries of the poore, and the disability of the better sort to relieve them; the total decay and subversion of Trade, together with the forfeiture and loss of the honor and reputation of the Nation".²⁷⁰ The knights, gentlemen and freeholders of Warwickshire declared that they were "deeply affected with and sadly sensible of the present Miseries, which both our Selves and the whole Nation groan under".²⁷¹ Finally, the freeholders, citizens and burgesses of the late Western Association implored Parliament to "ease and unburden our impoverished, oppressed Nations from their many years unsupportable, incessant Burdens, Taxes, Contributions, Excises, and Imposts of all kinds", and to put an end to the foreign hostilities which were ruining English trade.²⁷²

It was natural for men to turn against the Government which had promised so much in the way of reconstruction, and performed so little. A writer of 1658, describing

the ruin of trade, asked: "Is it probable you can subsist much longer by imposed taxes without the people's affection . . . ?" ²⁷³ Charles II was welcomed back as a saviour of trade no less than of the constitution. A pamphlet of 1660 described the way in which the oppression of the Interregnum Governments had been harder to bear than that of Charles I. Under the old system of ship money and other exactions, the nation at least received value for its money in the shape of protection from the Crown, but under the Commonwealth the people were squeezed dry without apparent result. "We are filled with howlings; our trades are generally lost, and there is none to give us work . . . and whilst we are lessened in our manufactures and vocations and industries, we are raised in rents, and food, and taxes, and all things belonging to our livelihood." ²⁷⁴ The political instability of the Interregnum had been paralleled by its economic instability, and it is not surprising that London, which had been the backbone of resistance to Charles I, should have welcomed his successor with open arms.

CHAPTER III

THE LAND PROBLEM

“ Wee know that England cannott bee a free Commonwealth unless all the poore commoners have a free use and benefitt of the land.”
Winstanley to the Lord General and Council of War, 1649.

(I) DISSOLUTION OF THE OLD SYSTEM

ALTHOUGH at this time industry and commerce were rapidly becoming predominant in the economic life of the country, their place was not yet fully assured, and it was the land which still deserved the place of primary importance assigned to it by Harrington.¹ For a century and a half before 1640, the land problem had been a burning question to which no satisfactory answer could be found. In the Middle Ages, landholding was inseparably connected with political and social functions, and lord and tenant were bound together by a comprehensive tie of which economic interest was only a single strand. This system was upheld by a network of customary regulations, which put obstacles in the way of free development, and though long before the end of the fifteenth century forces had been at work to dissolve the manorial organization from within, its framework was still rigid enough to resist determinedly the wave of individualism and free competition which characterized the economic side of the Renaissance. Modern enterprise struggled against mediaeval restriction in a sphere which allowed little room for adaptation, and the alarm of contemporaries at the victory of the new forces has left deep marks on the literature and political thought of Tudor England.

Though enclosure by the peasants and enclosure for arable farming went on during the sixteenth century, the most significant feature in the agricultural history of the time was the rise of the capitalist sheep farmer, who regarded land—holding primarily as a business from which profits could be drawn, and viewed with impatience an older system which attempted to impose restrictions upon lord as well as upon peasant. From all sides came complaints of a new terror stalking through the land—the swallowing up of men by sheep. “Enclosure” was a comprehensive word, which

included several aspects of agrarian change, but the type of enclosure which contemporaries had in mind was interference with the tenants' open field strips, and encroachment on the common land. In defending their common rights or customary tenure, the chief sanction to which the peasants could appeal was the customary law of the manor, but the force of this law was gradually weakening with the decay of the facts and theory which had created it.

The most effective defence which the peasants secured came from the Government, which was actuated partly by political and military considerations, and partly by a natural disposition to maintain traditional forms of social organization. From 1489 to 1597 there was a long series of Acts against depopulation, which aimed at regulating enclosure in the interests of tillage and of the small cultivator. To legislate was comparatively easy, but to enforce such legislation was difficult, especially when the most important local administrators, the justices of the peace, were drawn from the very classes who offended most frequently against enclosure statutes. After 1550, administration was sometimes placed in the hands of special bodies of commissioners, but it was such courts as the Star Chamber and Court of Requests which supplied the real stimulus, decided difficult cases, and gave the peasant such protection as he obtained.

The main weakness of the Government's action lay in its reluctance to put into practice a definite policy which would have given the peasants some kind of legal security. Both under Elizabeth and the first two Stuarts, statesmen preferred to follow a policy of spasmodic benevolence, which became active in times of distress and unrest, only to subside when the immediate need was passed. In 1630, a rise in corn prices called forth a burst of activity. Letters were sent from the Council to the justices of five Midland counties, ordering them to remove all enclosures which had been made in the last two years.² In 1632, 1635, and 1636 commissions were appointed, and the justices of assize were ordered to enforce the statutes against enclosure. As a result of these activities, pasture land was ploughed up in some counties.³ The Government of Charles I was not above using its divine prerogative as an instrument of financial extortion, and the heavy fines which were imposed for depopulation between 1635 and 1638 did not represent an altogether disinterested attempt to put down enclosures. The efficacy of this particular

attempt to translate paternal despotism into practice is doubtful, but it was naturally unpopular with the gentry. The Grand Remonstrance of 1641⁴ declared that "the conversion of arable into pasture, continuance of pasture under the name of depopulation, have driven many millions out of the subjects' purses without any considerable profit to His Majesty".

It was true that the efforts of Tudor and Stuart Governments to deal with the land problem had succeeded only in tempering the wind without altering its main direction. But it is likely that the Long Parliament's complaint was produced less by sorrow at the failure of Charles's enclosure policy, than by anger at the whole theory and practice of paternal government which had prompted it. The struggle between King and Parliament can be roughly summed up as a conflict between individual rights and royal authority, conceived of as resting, in the last resort, on a religious sanction. At best, this authority aimed at serving the public interest, if necessary, by extra-legal means; at worst, it was a mere cloak for favouritism and extortion. By interfering with private property in land and capital, the Government had aroused widespread indignation among the propertied classes who now formed the backbone of resistance to Charles. In his vigorous attack on Sir Robert Berkeley, one of the advocates of prerogative power, Mr. Pierpont complained that the insecurity of property had disorganized the whole of society. "The Countryman followed the plough, and his thinking he was assured of his right of property and Liberty gave him ability to do it This man hath seen his goods taken from him without his, or his Knights of the Shire, or Burgesses' consent or advise."⁵ Though the sufferings of the countryman were useful for rhetorical purposes, most members of the Long Parliament were probably more concerned with protecting their own property rights, which had been infringed by Strafford and Laud. Pym, speaking on the occasion of Strafford's impeachment, pointed out that the law was the safeguard of all private interest, and that without this safeguard every man had a like right to property and privilege.⁶

Yet more hateful was ecclesiastical interference with the rights of ownership. Sir John Culpepper complained that, among other offences, the clergy had dared to meddle with men's freeholds by means of suspension and deprivation.⁷ One reason for the peculiarly bitter attack on Laud was his

high-handed action on enclosure commissions. Clarendon, describing the way in which the Archbishop obstinately refused to see which side his bread was buttered, said that, "The revenue of too many of the court consisted principally in enclosures, and improvements of that nature, which he still opposed passionately except they were founded upon law. . . . And so he did a little too much countenance the Commission for Depopulation."⁸ On one occasion, Laud told some indignant freeholders to "go plead law in inferior courts. They should not plead it before him". And, as was later complained in the House of Lords, he fined a certain Mr. Talbois £200 merely for "using the property of his Freehold".⁹

It was unlikely that the traditional methods of relieving the peasantry would appeal to a Parliament of landowners; yet the war, with the social disturbances and heavy taxation which it involved, inflicted grave injury on the agricultural population. The devastation wrought by Cavaliers and Roundheads alike is the subject of a pamphlet called *The Western Husbandman's Lamentation*,¹⁰ while in Surrey the accounts of a yeoman show that in 1648-9 he paid £6 6s. 11d. in nine months towards the upkeep of Fairfax's army, and from May, 1644, to January, 1646, the parish of Elstead, which was very poor, paid at the rate of £11 monthly to the armies.¹¹

The distress caused by the armies and by increased taxation did not, however, stand alone. Equally, or even more, important was the shock to agrarian relationships caused by the transfer of a large number of estates. The confiscations of a revolutionary Government are often tinged with a flavour of Pecksniff, who devoured men for their own good, and it must perhaps be accounted for righteousness to the politicians of the Interregnum that they made little pretence of devouring for any other reason than hunger. The heritage of the inadequate financial organization left by the Stuart Governments weighed heavily on the Long Parliament, which had to provide for its own forces and pay the Scots' army. Dr. Shaw calculates that, on an average, there was a deficit of from £400,000 to £500,000 yearly on the total expenditure of the three kingdoms.¹² In these circumstances, the Royalists' estates offered obvious possibilities. At first, only the revenue of delinquents' lands was touched,¹³ for the ordinances of 1643 seem to have provided for the sale of goods rather than landed

property.¹⁴ Then, the policy of allowing delinquents to compound for their estates became popular. The Committee for Compounding was formed in 1643, when it had become urgently necessary to raise money for paying the Scots' army, and in 1644-5 definite rules for collection were laid down. By 1646, the current was setting in the direction of actual confiscation, and in September of that year it was stated that delinquents who came in after 1st May should be allowed to compound only at the highest rates in the propositions.¹⁵ Three years later, confiscation was openly advocated, since "the present mode cannot conduce to the end, which is to raise considerable sums in a reasonable time, whereas now it comes in by driblets, passes through many hands, and comes in a dilatory way."¹⁶ In July, 1651, an Act was passed forfeiting the estates of seventy-three delinquents and providing that they should be surveyed and sold, the tenants being given the first chance to purchase.¹⁷ A second Act was passed in August, 1652, which contained twenty-nine names,¹⁸ and a third Act in the November of that year condemned 678 delinquents to confiscation.¹⁹ Episcopal estates were dealt with in summary fashion. An ordinance of October, 1646, provided for the speedy sale of bishops' lands and originated the system of "doubling", by which the Government's creditors could advance a sum equal to that of their former loan, and be secured for both out of the receipts from the excise and the sale of bishops' estates.²⁰ The lands of Deans and Chapters were ordered to be sold by an ordinance of 1649.²¹ At the end of the list came the Crown estates, which were confiscated in July, 1649, by an ordinance very much like that which applied to episcopal estates.²² Despite this adoption of a definite policy of confiscation and sale, the system of receiving rents from delinquents' estates and of compounding still continued, except where notorious delinquents were concerned.

The minutes of the Committee for Compounding show that it regarded itself quite frankly as an instrument of extortion. There are numerous complaints of estates being let at an unduly low rate, and this at a time when "the necessities of the Commonwealth for money are so great that they require more than ordinary care in those employed about the public revenues".²³ The management of sequestered estates was vested in the hands of the Commissioners for Compounding, and they were ordered to consider how the land might be improved to the best advantage, to sell

wood, to hold manorial courts, and to grant copyhold estates according to the manorial customs.²⁴ Already, in 1648, it had occurred to Parliament that the uncertainty of copyhold tenure might be turned to advantage, and they instructed the Commissioners to revive obsolete Courts Leet and Baron on sequestered manors.²⁵ In 1650, the County Commissioners were told to certify what courts were held, what copyholds were to be granted, and what profits could be made thereby.²⁶ One of the Commissioners was to be present whenever courts were held on sequestered estates, even if they had been let, and was to use his best endeavours to increase the fines.²⁷

The Commissioners' efforts met with varying degrees of success. In Wiltshire, it was said that there were many copyholds on delinquents' and recusants' estates which would yield good profits, if the Commissioners were given power to discover, by means of surveys, the details which the tenants concealed from them.²⁸ The Westmoreland officials were more successful. In April, 1650, they reported that they had treated with several persons for sequestered estates, having raised the value as much as possible, and they promised to carry out instructions as to the keeping of courts. Less than a year later, they stated that they had caused courts to be kept on several sequestered manors, and had found that a considerable sum might be raised from general and particular fines.²⁹ The Cambridge Committee reported that they had several manors where courts ought to be kept, but, because none were held, they could not receive any quit rents charged on the various lands.³⁰ In March, 1651, the Worcestershire Commissioners declared that there were many copyholds concealed from their knowledge, which they could only discover by keeping courts at which the tenants were bound to produce their copies. By April they were able to report that they had begun to hold courts.³¹

The Cumberland Commissioners seem to have been slacker or more troubled by scruples than some of their colleagues. They had to be reminded that, though there were many lands in their county held by small rents and arbitrary fines on death or alienation, which often amounted to more than the actual rent, yet they had taken no course to exploit this source of profit, and had been specially lax in dealing with the late Earl of Derby's tenants.³² This admonition from the central authority awakened the Cumberland Commissioners to a sense of their duty to the Exchequer. They reported that, in accordance with the orders received,

they had demanded a fine from the tenants of the late Earl of Derby, who now replied that neither they nor their predecessors had ever paid a general fine at the death of any lord. "Still we ordered our agent to proceed to levy it, when they explained that the State dealt worse with them than any former landlord, and produced Judge Fell's opinion, and made it their special instance which we send you." Judge Fell declared that to demand a general fine was against all precedent. Those fines which were arbitrary should be made certain, and time given for payment. He added diplomatically that he was sure that the Parliament did not wish its agents to use the poor tenants in a worse fashion than the old delinquent landlords had done.³³ There is no evidence, and little probability, that this appeal to the Government's better nature bore fruit, for statesmen were faced by growing financial difficulties which could be met only by tapping every legal source of revenue.

Another complaint of the state as landlord came from the tenants of Heaton manor, Lancaster, who described how they and their ancestors had long been tenants of inheritance, but had been forced by their landlord to take leases for lives, involving "personal and slavish services". Since he had become a delinquent, the manor had been sequestered by the County Committee, who now distrained them for unreasonable sums instead of the said services.³⁴ Viscount Stafford's tenants complained that, since they had become tenants of the state, their rents had been raised "to extreme rack rents", and that they had been charged with taxes, contrary to Act of Parliament.³⁵ The County Committees were sometimes accused of acting with undue severity and in excess of their instructions. One petitioner stated that they had driven away his cattle and seized his goods, and now threatened to dispossess him, despite his being very poor and having a wife and three children. In this case, the local committee declared that the petitioner had never paid his rent and that his lease was counterfeit, and there the matter rested.³⁶ But, in the case of a Rutlandshire petitioner, the Central Committee blamed their representatives for distraining his cattle on pretence of an undervaluation, and for selling his estate contrary to orders for restitution.³⁷ The Carnarvon Committee were warned that their proceedings were "more rigorous than just", and were ordered to repay a half year's rent which they had unlawfully collected.³⁸

It seems likely that this policy of exploitation would

lead to interference with the rights of commoners, but in the proceedings of the Committee for Compounding there is little trace of anything of the kind. The Dorset Commissioners reported that the townsmen of Weymouth and Melcomb Regis had appeared before them to claim part of the farm called Melcomb Common as the town's inheritance. Documentary evidence had been destroyed when the town chest was broken into by soldiers, but they had produced witnesses to prove their case.³⁹ The question was referred to the Navy Committee, who reported that they had found by deposits on oath, and by testimony of knights of the shire, that the townsmen were right. The House then gave an order for delaying the sale of the Common till further notice.⁴⁰ On a petition of the poor people of Belton and Branston, tenants of Lichfield forest, the Committee for Compounding granted them £20 instead of their common rights, an arrangement which may have struck the tenants as less satisfactory when the money was spent.⁴¹

The attempt on the part of the state to take over the rôle of landlord does not seem, from the tenant's point of view, to have been an improvement on the old conditions. But, while the Commissioners' rule might sometimes be spasmodic or lax, the private individuals who supplanted the delinquent landlords would be likely to administer their new possessions more consistently. It is difficult to estimate how many estates changed hands, but the number was very considerable. An index of the names of Royalists whose estates were confiscated during the Commonwealth gives a total of 1,677; and, apart from those whose lands were actually confiscated, a large number were forced to sell their estates to meet the compositions and the decimation tax.⁴³ Thus, sweeping changes, so sweeping, indeed, as to recall the Reformation land settlement, must have taken place in the tenure and management of land throughout the length and breadth of the country.

Among those who stepped into the Royalists' shoes were merchants who had lent to the Government. In November, 1645, an ordinance was read to enable two merchants, R. Hill and W. Pennoyer, to receive profits from the lands of the Earl of Worcester, Lord Herbert, and Sir John Somerset, in payment of a debt of £9,402.⁴⁴ Some months later, it was referred to the Committee for Irish Affairs to contract with these two merchants for lands belonging to any delinquents, in satisfaction of the debt due to them

from the state.⁴⁵ Richard Bradshaw, another merchant, petitioned the House in 1645, and was rewarded by an order granting him the profits from delinquents' estates in the City of Chester till he had collected £2,000 of the debt due to him.⁴⁶ A second class who were rewarded out of the confiscated estates were Parliamentarians who had distinguished themselves in battle or debate. In 1646, an ordinance was brought in to grant the interest and estate of Lord Cottington in some lands in Reading to Sir Francis Knollys.⁴⁷ Colonel Whalley was given £300 worth of inheritable land from the Earl of Newcastle's estate in lieu of the arrears due to him,⁴⁸ and in 1647 an ordinance was brought in to settle land to the value of £5,000 on Sir Thomas Fairfax and his heirs.⁴⁹ The local Committees for Sequestration had golden opportunities of making good bargains for themselves and their friends. In 1645, the Worcester Committee reported that most estates in the county were let by the Commissioners to their agents or to the owners at very low rates,⁵⁰ and in 1646 the Commons forbade any officer employed in the business of sequestrations to lease an estate in the county where he was employed.⁵¹ The County Committee for Rutland was suspiciously eager to sell a certain estate, and the Central Committee remarked that "your severity makes us suspect something beyond love of justice".⁵² Clement Walker declared that the godly Parliament men were not averse from adding riches to virtue by speculating in Royalists' estates. "For which purpose they have their Broakers abroad to buy in Souldiers' and Officers Debentures for Arrears at five shillings and six shillings in the pound, though they are allowed the whole summ of the Debentures in the purchase, which doubling in ready money, they purchase upon such easy particulars as brings it down from ten years' purchase, to two or three years' purchase. They are not seen in the business themselves, but buy them in other men's names, and to the secret use of their Wives and Children".⁵³

The records of the Committee for Compounding point to land speculation on a large scale. One of the most daring speculators was Wildman, who is said by Clarendon to have been "bred a scholar in the University of Cambridge", and who afterwards became one of the chief Agitators.⁵⁴ He bought at least twenty-three manors, a large number of lands, houses, cottages, coal-mines and steel works in Salop, and his purchases were distributed over twenty

counties.⁵⁵ J. Rushworth, the author of the well-known *Historical Collections*, and Secretary-General to the Council of War, bought lands on a more modest scale in conjunction with a certain G. Crouch. He seems to have acquired eight manors, various houses, farms, and cottages, and a hall in Lincolnshire.⁵⁶ G. Crouch himself bought at least thirteen manors, a large number of farms and land, Rutchester Towers in Northumberland, Corby Castle in Cumberland, Gresley Castle in Derbyshire, and coal mines in Durham. His purchases were concentrated in Yorkshire, Northumberland, and Durham.⁵⁷ Though there does not seem to be any definite clue to his identity in the pages of the *Calendar*, he is described once as "Gilbert Crouch of Clement Danes",⁵⁸ and thus it seems possible that he was one of the rich London merchants or professional men who seized this opportunity of trafficking in landed property. W. Cox, who is explicitly described as a London merchant, bought four manors and several farms, lands, and rent charges,⁵⁹ sometimes in conjunction with a certain S. Foxley, who speculated on a much larger scale, and acquired at least twelve manors, a castle in Somerset, various houses, farms, and lands and a colliery in Northumberland.⁶⁰

It would be interesting to trace the character and antecedents of these men who replaced the Royalist landlords. As in the parallel case of the Reformation land changes, the contrast between the administration of the new landlords and that of their predecessors can easily be exaggerated, but, in each instance, the newcomers would probably regard their purchases more in the light of a purely commercial proposition. An intercepted letter to a merchant in Paris remarks, speaking of sequestered estates, "The Tenants of those Lands do perfectly hate those that bought them as possible Men can do. These men are the greatest Tyrants everywhere as Men can be, for they wrest from the poor Tenants all former Immunities and Freedoms they formerly enjoyed."⁶¹ Winstanley, writing in 1652, speaks of the "new (more covetous) Gentry, who overstock Commons with Sheep and Cattle; so that inferior Tenants and poor Labourers can hardly keep a Cow but half-starve her."⁶²

In the records of the Committee for Compounding there are many instances of rents being raised and tenants being evicted. For example, at the request of the tenants of a certain Hatton in Cambridgeshire, the County Commissioners certified that, since Major Audley had bought the estate,

he had demanded higher rents and summoned the tenants before the Committee for Removing Obstructions. They now begged that the leases made long before the bill of sale might be confirmed.⁶³ Several petitioners complained that they had been tenants for many years of houses in Blackfriars, which were now taken by R. Benson, upholsterer, of London, who sought to evict them. A year later, two of the tenants declared that they had really bid more for the lands than Benson, and begged that his lease might not be confirmed. The Committee ordered that the two tenants should have their houses at the old rents and that Benson's lease should not be renewed.⁶⁴ In 1651, a wrangle went on between rival bidders for an estate in Staffordshire, in the course of which the tenants prayed that they might not be evicted from their farms, that their rents might be continued at the same rate, and that they might be relieved from the oppression of the Grosvenors, who had lately turned two of them out of their lands.⁶⁵ Joan Strode complained that the County Committee had leased her estate for a year to Captain Hooper, who threatened to cut down her woods and prevent her tillage.⁶⁶ A former tenant of the Countess of Rutland described how the County Committee had let two-thirds of her farm to a man named Allen, "who drove off her cattle, turned her out of doors," and would not allow her to remain in the one-third part let to her by the Countess. The County Committee were ordered to certify if this estate had been sequestered for recusancy only, and, if so, they were not to meddle with the one-third remaining to the petitioner.⁶⁷

Sometimes, an old landlord would raise his rents, probably because he had had to lease his estate at enhanced rates from the sequestrators. In 1653, Mr. Fowler's tenants told the Central Committee that they had long held lands belonging to him in Staffordshire, and he had promised them that they should retain them at the same rent during his life-time. But he had been sequestered, and had leased his estate in the name of R. Tonks, and now distrained their cattle and goods for pretended arrears.⁶⁸ There were several complaints against the delinquent or "malignant" landlords who remained in possession of their estates, and who probably determined to get all they could out of them before they were faced with compounding or confiscation. In 1646, an ordinance for relief of well-affected tenants against malignant landlords was considered,⁶⁹ but nothing seems to have come of it, for in 1650 the Council reported that it was "con-

ducible to the honour and safety of the Commonwealth" that some time should be appointed to pass the Acts for relieving tenants from the oppression of their malignant landlords.⁷⁰ The tenants of T. Dyke of Wartbole and others in Cumberland told the Protector in 1654 that "those Delinquents which are our landlords break all our Customs and rob us of all ancient and just privilege". T. Dyke was accused of levying excessive fines, forcing the tenants to grind corn at his mill and imposing various burdens such as forced contributions of poultry.⁷¹

The tenants of Hambledon in Rutlandshire told the Council of State a long and sad story, which was probably typical of the sufferings of certain peasants at this time. They had for many years been tenants of the Duke of Buckingham, when Thomas Wayte, a member of the late Parliament, purchased the manor from the trustees for the sale of delinquents' lands. In order that he might purchase the tenant right without contravening an Act of Parliament giving tenants the first option of purchase,⁷² he promised the peasants that, if they made no difficulties, all customary rights to common should remain unaltered, and copyhold tenure should follow the established precedent of twenty-one years or three lives. By a mixture of promises and threats, the tenants were induced to give way, and assent to a proposition put much in the form of "Heads I win, tails you lose". The consequences of their agreement have been altogether disastrous. The tenants have lost their commons and pastures and been forced to enclose the remainder of their lands; the promises as to copyhold tenure have been broken and unreasonable conditions imposed. Unless speedy relief is given, the manor is in grave danger of total depopulation.⁷³ In 1653, the Council of State ordered that the petition of the grand jury, gentry, freeholders, and other inhabitants near Hambledon should be referred to the judges of that circuit, who were to settle the differences between Colonel Wayte and his tenants if they could, and, if not, to report to the Council.⁷⁴

A shorter version of the same tale was told by the tenants of the late Dean and Chapter of Durham. They say that they have applied to the Committee for Removal of Obstructions in the Sale of Dean and Chapters' lands, and their claim has been acknowledged and their tenancy confirmed. But they were too much impoverished by the war to come to London and see the matter through, and "therefore resolved

to submit to whosoever should purchase their Estates and become their Landlords, resting confident that according to the said Claims and Order of Reprisal they would allow the said Tenants to renew their Leases under them, as formerly they did in the time of the Dean and Chapter". But now they have been turned out of their houses and are in great want and misery, their faith in the efficacy of the law rudely shaken.⁷⁵

Thomas Wayte and the successors of the Durham clergy represent the new landlords at their worst, and are a glaring example of the "make-beggars" whom Moore indicts for peopling the country and towns with destitute families. The majority of landlords would shrink from a line of conduct which was at once inhuman and injudicious. But even the best among the new owners would be likely to turn the searching rays of legality on the dim body of customary rights which had hitherto partially safeguarded the tenants' interests; while the upward movement of corn prices supplied a general motive for increasing rents.⁷⁶ The effect of legal inquiry on existing tenures is indicated by an account of sequestrations in the county of Cheshire. Out of the forty entries which related to the tenants of Edward Warren of Poynton, eleven were put down as "pretences".⁷⁷ In the case of Edward F. Fitton's tenants in Cheshire, twenty-four leases were undisputed and twenty-three described as "pretended but not shewed".⁷⁸ The triumph of the common law was not fraught with unmixed blessings for the lower classes of the community. Thorold Roger's inquiries bear out the foregoing evidence of a movement towards greater extortion on the part of landlords. He finds, for example, that the lease of Ruislip Manor which was renewed in 1607 at a fine of £66 13s. 4d. was considered to be worth £320 in 1664. Again, the fine at Monxton in Hampshire which was £20 in 1603 had risen to £90 by 1675.⁷⁹

(II) THE AGITATION OF THE PEASANTRY AND THE LAND REFORMERS

During the Civil Wars and Interregnum a long-buried stream of social discontent burst forth to horrify those who were content to drift with the main current of political reform. The most obvious line of attack open to the peasantry was the breaking-down of enclosures, and the Parliamentary Journals for the years 1640-4 are full of references to

enclosure riots. The lands belonging to the Royal family were among the first to suffer. "Disorderly persons" entered on the reclaimed grounds belonging to the Prince of Wales in Cornwall and pulled down the fences,⁸⁰ and the inhabitants of the wastes reclaimed by the King in the Forest of Dean followed their example, saying, "that so often as the said Enclosure shall be repaired, they will do the like, and turn in their cattle, as they were wont to do before the said Improvement."⁸¹ From Huntingdon, came the news that the possessions of Her Majesty and the Earl of March had been attacked by rebellious tenants, who, assembling by sound of drum, had set forth in a body to pull down the fences and cast in the ditches.⁸² The Middlesex justices were ordered to secure His Majesty's possessions in the recently enclosed lands on Hounslow Heath, and to make a thorough search in the neighbouring villages for those who had been responsible for the late tumults.⁸³ An improvement had recently been made for the Prince of Wales out of the waste grounds in West Durham and Roxham, a proportion being set out for the poor and the full consent of the commoners gained. But now, "several hundred" persons had pulled down the enclosures and put in their cattle. They had been ordered to stop by the High Sheriff of Norfolk, but they were "so far from obeying his Commands that they further threatened to destroy all other improved Grounds . . ." ⁸⁴

Others besides the Royal family suffered from this ferment among the peasants. In the spring of 1641, the Lords recorded that several orders had been made to suppress the great tumults and unlawful assemblies which were taking place within many towns in Huntingdonshire. These orders had "not only been disobeyed, but contemned, and widely despised, by many of the Inhabitants of those Manors". The Lords therefore ordered the sheriff and justices to go to the scene of disorder, taking with them the trained bands.⁸⁵ The Earl of Hertford informed the Lords that he had been rudely disturbed in his possession of 160 acres of enclosed land in Somerset by a disorderly rabble, who threatened violence to any who opposed them.⁸⁶ In 1643, the Commons were told that "divers rude people" had assembled and made their way to certain grounds in Shenley, Hertfordshire, and had there sawn down the gates, threatening to turn in their cattle and lay the grounds open for common.⁸⁷ The West Riding quarter session records contain several indictments for enclosure riots. At Doncaster in 1640, four people were

indicted for forcibly entering the property of T. Cropley, "with many other unknown evil doers", and riotously expelling the owner,⁸⁸ and a year later there were five indictments for similar offences.⁸⁹ Both now and later, the improved lands in the fens were the scene of considerable agitation. In the country lying between Borne and Kyme in Lincolnshire "great tumults and unlawful assemblies" took place, and orders to desist were "rudely despised".⁹⁰ Sir Anthony Thomas's possessions in Lincolnshire were attacked by men who violently damaged the sluices and sewers, filled up the ditches and turned in droves of cattle.⁹¹

The extent and seriousness of this agitation roused the Government to action. The House of Lords took a grave view of the situation and prophesied that, if such tumults continued, the rebels would be encouraged to "take unto themselves unsufferable Boldness".⁹² In July, 1641, they noted that daily complaints were received by the House of the violent breaking down of enclosures, "which have been observed to have been more frequently done since this Parliament began than formerly." They therefore ordered that no enclosure, which had been in its owner's hands on the first day of the present Parliament or formerly, should be subject to violent interference. If any disturbance took place, the possessor was entitled by virtue of the present order to summon two justices and such other helpers as he should think fit, and proceed to "appease and quiet" his possessions.⁹³

Subsequent entries in the Lords' Journals show that landowners were glad to avail themselves of this order. Ten days after it had been passed, two of the Queen's tenants reported that their ditches had been thrown down and their possessions disturbed, and begged that the order might be enforced.⁹⁴ Two similar petitions were received during 1641 and 1642,⁹⁵ and in April, 1643, the Lords were informed that the Earl of Suffolk's possessions in Essex had been attacked by various disorderly inhabitants, who threatened to break down all the fences, "allegding that, if they took not Advantage of the Time, they shall never have the Opportunity again". The House directed that the Earl should have an order for quieting his possessions.⁹⁶ Two months later, complaints were received from the Earls of Bedford and Portland concerning serious offences committed by certain inhabitants of Wittlesea. An unruly band of 150 had assembled to the tolling of a bell, and, with the help

of armed men, thrown down the fences, and destroyed the grain and timber. When a justice arrived to restore order, the rebels declared scoffingly that "he was but a Parliament Justice", and, after this, the riot assumed such alarming proportions that some of the Parliamentary troops were called out to suppress it. The Lords declared that the offenders had been guilty of riot and disobedience to the orders of the House, and decreed that they should be bound over to good behaviour.⁹⁷ Among the complaints of violence which were made at this time, it is worth noting that two, at least, referred to enclosures of recent creation. Thus, in 1644 Sir John Cutts asked to be quieted in possession of an enclosure of twenty years' standing,⁹⁸ and in 1646 Lord Berkeley reported an attack on a parcel of land called the "New-Gained Grounds", which had been in his hands for thirty years past.⁹⁹

Though the Upper House was the most frequent recipient of complaints of enclosure riots, the Commons had also to consider the question. They received in 1642 a letter written by the sheriffs and justices of Durham, which told how the inhabitants of that county had lately met together "to the Number of Three hundred or Four hundred in One Company, in a Warlike Manner, upon Pretence of pulling down some Inclosures", and had actually carried out their threats in some parts of the county. The Commons ordered the justices to take action against the offenders and to suppress further riots; but repeated attacks on property had not yet driven them to entrench themselves behind a wall of repression, and they added that, if any people in Durham had been injured by enclosure lately made without warrant of law or consent of the parties, they were to present a petition to the House, who would take "such speedy Course for their Relief as shall be agreeable to Justice".¹⁰⁰ In 1643, an ordinance was passed to suppress riots in Somerset, Dorset and Wiltshire. It was stated that Parliament had been informed that riotous and disorderly persons had lately come together in large numbers to break open houses and throw down enclosures, and had gone so far as to boast openly that they cared for no Parliamentary ordinance or declaration. To prevent these disturbances becoming more serious, the Deputy Lieutenants and others in command of forces were ordered to use them if need arose.¹⁰¹

Spasmodic rioting, directed against particular grievances, was no new phenomenon in times of political unrest, but, in

this instance, it must be considered in conjunction with an outburst of agitation against the abuses connected with landed property, and finally against that property as an institution.

The insecurity and uncertain character of copyhold tenure had caused much hardship among the peasantry, and had troubled social reformers for the last two centuries. During the Commonwealth, spasmodic agitation for "reasonable" and fixed fines still continued, but, side by side with this ancient plea, there arose a general criticism of the whole system of copyhold tenure, probably formulated under the influence of current ideas on the evils of arbitrary proceedings at law. A programme of social reform drawn up by the Levellers included a proviso that: "the Ancient and almost antiquated badge of Slavery, viz. all bare Tenures by Copies, Oaths of Fealty, Homage, Fines at Will of Lord, etc. (being the Conqueror's marks on the people), may be taken away," and a valuation set at which all copyholds might be purchased and turned into freeholds. In case any should be unwilling or unable to fall in with this plan, a definite period should be fixed after which all uncertain services and fines would be converted into fixed rents.¹⁰² In a petition to Parliament signed by "many thousands", it was urged that copyhold tenure, the chief remaining badge of Norman tyranny, should be removed for ever.¹⁰³

One writer pointed out that the justification of customary tenure had disappeared with the conversion of the manor from a social and political into a purely economic unit. "For the Nobility and Gentry, their pristine honour and regulations, both as relating to the power and command they formerly had over their Tenants, holding of their said Mannors, as also in reference to our present opinion and estimation of all men, is utterly lost and vanished, no man in these daies valueng his Lord of whom he holds his Lands (his free rent being paid) more then another man, scarce anything at all."¹⁰⁴

Those advocates of economic and agricultural reform who wasted no sympathy on common rights often entered a protest against copyhold. The author of *Chaos* suggested that all copyhold estates should be freed by reasonable composition with the lords, and that baronial courts and services ought to be abolished;¹⁰⁵ and another writer who ruthlessly attacked wastes and commons thought that copyhold was a bar to progress.¹⁰⁶ G. Plattes, one of the chief agricultural experts of the time, pointed out that fear of

eviction without compensation discouraged many tenants from improving their land. "For all men have a naturall pronenesse to worke for their posteritie, if they might be secure how they should not be frustrated in their expectations; and the very bane of Husbandry at this day, is the uncertaintie of their tenure."¹⁰⁷ Blith showed that copyholders had a positive interest in not improving their land, for "if a tenant be at never so great pains or loss for the Improvement of his Land, he doth thereby but occasion a greater Rack upon himself or else invest his Landlord into his cost and labour gratis, or at best lyes at his Landlord's mercy for requittall." He suggested that a law should be passed whereby every landlord would be obliged either to give compensation for improvement, or security of tenure for a term of years long enough to enable the tenant to requite himself.¹⁰⁸

The writer of the *Copyholders' Plea* proceeded along more conventional lines, stating that "it is agreed of all hands, That all excessiveness is abhorred in Law; and that where the fine is uncertain, yet it must be reasonable". Before this last hundred years, there was never any trouble as to the amount of copyhold fines. "The Fines anciently taken were indeed but very small and inconsiderable, rather Gratuities and Acknowledgements given to the Lords for their Stewards' Wages and Charges in keeping of these Courts at which Copyholders have their Admittance, than out of any reference or respect to the Rent of Copyhold." With the disappearance of feudal duties, many feudal rights, such as aids, became formal and stereotyped, but uncertain copyhold lived on, a harmful mediaeval survival. To seek for legal remedy was often to look for trouble, "when the Chancellor or Judges (before whom the reasonableness dependeth to be determined) are themselves Lords of such Copyholders, and biassed with their own interest and concernment." Since neither custom nor existing law provides an adequate remedy, the writer declares that it is necessary to lay down some general rule for copyhold fines. In the case of estates forfeited or escheated and granted afresh by the lord, he can take what fines he likes, since he is an active party in the transaction. But in the case of fines of inheritance, "the Lord giveth nothing, nothing passeth from him, he is only an Instrument and compellable to admit . . ." When the tenant improves his land this does not justify higher fines, for here again the landlord is only a passive instrument. Moreover, copyholders

are rated equally with freemen for the support of the Commonwealth, and should, therefore, receive equal treatment. Reformation seems possible in the year 1653, for the "bias of Self-interest is we hope resolved with the late Parliament, and that in this there are not so many Lords of Manors to hinder so good and acceptable a Service to their Country".¹⁰⁹

The copyholders themselves were chiefly concerned with the old problem of how to secure fixed or reasonable fines. Their tenure varied from manor to manor, but uncertain fines were more usual than fixed,¹¹⁰ and it was natural that the landlords should take advantage of this fact to increase their incomes. In 1640, Sir Francis Howard wrote to Sir William Howard that trouble was brewing with the tenants at Gilsland, for, at the last Court held there, many refused to answer as tenants at will, a thing they had never dared to do since the decision obtained against them in Chancery. The rebels had assembled all the tenants and persuaded them to contribute towards the sending up of six representatives to follow their suit in Parliament. If they were not firmly dealt with, "they will make a general revolt from all landlords."¹¹¹ On their side, the tenants declared that from time immemorial they had held their lands on payment of a fourpenny fine on the death or exchange of a tenant, but since Lord Howard had bought the land he had raised the fine and disturbed them in their possession. They had already appealed to Chancery, with the result that, though Baron Bromley thought that twenty years' rent was a reasonable fine, he made a proviso that the "fines thus allowed shall give no countenance thereafter to make the fines of the tenements certain". Now, Lord Howard demanded excessive fines and had turned several tenants out of their homes. The petition was referred to the Lord Keeper and Lord Chief Justice, who followed the temporizing policy of their predecessors by proposing to the lord that he should admit his tenants on payment of twenty-three years' rent, but insisting that the fines should not thereby become certain.¹¹² The Lords received a petition in 1641 from the copyhold tenants of Great Gaddesden, in Hertfordshire, who said that their right to benefit by certain ancient customs had, after some trouble, been confirmed by Chancery decree, but now the manor had changed hands and the new owner pretended that he was not bound thereby.¹¹³ A year later, the copyholders of Kenilworth manor complained that since the manor had been rack rented by the Queen to the Earl of

Monmouth, their customs had been altered and disregarded, many old tenants evicted and their copyholds granted to the Earl's own servants, or to those strangers who would bid highest for them.¹¹⁴

The advent of the Civil Wars did not make the copyholders' position any more certain, for, as has been shown, both the Government and the private landlord exploited this easy and profitable source of revenue. George Duncombe, steward of the manor of Woking, in Surrey, replied in 1646 to a petition of the copyhold tenants. He declared that all fines of admittance to the copyhold and customary lands were, without question, arbitrary and uncertain, and contended that the fines which had lately been collected were "very moderate".¹¹⁵ In January, 1648, a petition from the customary tenants of Westmoreland was read in the Commons,¹¹⁶ and in 1652 the Committee for Regulating the Law received a petition from the Leicestershire copyholders, who pointed out how "great an inconvenience and how disagreeable and inconsistent it is, for a free State to maintain by their Laws any arbitrary power as is used now by Lords of Mannors in severall places, upon Copyholders of inheritance, forcing them to pay uncertain Fines at their pleasures". It was stated that, when there were three or more changes in so many years, the arbitrary fines amounted to the total value of the land.¹¹⁷

Existing rights of property were attacked from another side by those who wished to abolish primogeniture. One of the effects of enclosure was to concentrate land in the hands of a diminishing number of men, and Winstanley complained that "in many parishes two or three of the great men bear all the sway, in making Assessments, overawing Constables and other Officers".¹¹⁸ Even those who advocated enclosure admitted that it was likely to result in hardship to the tenants when the land was in the hands of a few great lords.¹¹⁹ It was clear that this accumulation of land was due partly to the existing laws of inheritance, and, at a time when a general attack on privilege and monopoly was taking place, the land laws naturally came in for their share of criticism. A pamphleteer of 1659 is obviously following Harrington when he declares that his design is "to show how unsafe and injurious it would be to establish a Commonwealth on the ruins of a decayed Monarchy." Primogeniture had brought many evils in its train, of which greed was not the least, for "to what purpose is more wealth than what may

with credit bear up the port of a chief Minister of State, and furnish forth comforts and enjoyments in this Life? Is not he a Leviathan and more greedy than Death . . . or grave that desires more?" ¹²⁰

The Levellers' programme included an indictment of "the most unreasonable descent of inheritance to the eldest sonne only", ¹²¹ and, at another time, they proposed that the eldest son should have two-thirds of the inheritance and the rest be divided equally among the other children. ¹²² One writer bases his championship of the younger brother on arguments drawn from Nature and necessity. All institutions originate in Nature, but necessity determines which of them men select for their use. When greed and laziness entered into the original state of Nature, private property became necessary, and Nature inculcated a desire for inheritance, but the particular form which inheritance took was a matter of mere convenience. Its necessity and convenience having ceased, the law should lapse also, and not be allowed to bolster up the pride of elder brothers, who behave "as though the Law of God, of Nature, and all other Canon, Civill and Naturall Lawes, Constitutions and Customes sprung from them, could not either in Reason or Religion bar them of what they expect." ¹²³ Another writer protested against the special sanctuary allowed to the law of inheritance, and prayed statesmen to remove "this great monopoly so silently remaining among us". The law of Nature and equity should prevail over custom, and a law established on corrupt principles should be altered by the supreme authority of the nation. "To what end otherwise do assemblies meet, neither can there be more danger in this, than in Alteration of other things, the fabrick being to be altered, this may likewise be put into the building." ¹²⁴

Harrington reduced the scattered thoughts of his contemporaries to a science of politics. Himself a convinced aristocrat, he would have disclaimed any connection with the Diggers; yet the extremes met in realizing the close connection between economic and political power. Harrington maintained that the ownership of land decided where all other dominion lay. If one man is sole landlord, the government is an absolute monarchy, if the few own land, then it is mixed monarchy, "and if the whole people be landlords, or hold the Lands, so divided among them, that no one Man, or number of Men, within the Compass of the Few or Aristocracy overbalance them, the Empire (without

the interposition of force) is a Commonwealth." Harrington advised the Commonwealth statesmen to confirm political democracy by rotation of offices, and social democracy by an agrarian law, for "an equal Commonwealth is such a one as is equal both in the balance or foundation, and in the superstructure, that is to say, in her Agrarian Law, and in her Rotation". The object of the former measure was to prevent the future formation of large estates, and gradually to diminish those which already existed. Harrington did not insist on the equal partition of estates, but stipulated that in no case should the sum inherited by any one person amount to more than £2,000. No man was to acquire so much land as to bring the total over £2,000, and, except in the case of heiresses, the marriage portion was not to exceed £1,500. The hard lot of the younger brother roused Harrington to "marvel much how it comes to pass, that we should use our Children as we do our Puppys, take one, lay it in the lap, feed it with every good bit, and drown five; nay, yet worse; forasmuch as the Puppys are necessarily drowned; whereas the Children are left perpetually drowning."¹²⁵

Copyhold and primogeniture were regarded by their opponents as mere excrescences marring the institution of landed property which, in itself, they had no wish to destroy. It was left for the Diggers, and notably Winstanley, to work out a fairly complete theory of communism in land and attempt to translate it into practice. The Diggers were the economic offspring of the Levellers, a mainly political body who refused to acknowledge their precocious child. The party represented by Lilburne put forward no definitely communistic doctrines, but their opponents rightly insisted that advanced political democracy must pave the way for social revolution. "For levelling the Nobility and Gentry, is as apparent as the Sun, for doe they not intend the destruction of the Nobility when they seeke to take away their negative voice, and to make the supream power to be in the Common people; they intend also to levell all Estates and people, and to that end they bring this Argument in defence thereof."¹²⁶

On 16th April, 1649, the Council of State received disquieting news. They were told how "one Everard, once of the Army, butt was cashiered, who termeth himself a prophett", together with one or two kindred spirits, had begun to dig up the land on St. George's Hill in Surrey, and to sow it with parsnips, carrots, and beans. The numbers of

this quaint band were gradually increasing, and "they invite all to come in and helpe them, and promise them meate, drinke, and clothes. They doe threaten to pull downe and levell all parke pales, and lay open, and intend to plant there very shortly. They give out, they will bee four or five thousand within ten dayes . . . Itt is feared they have some designe in hand."¹²⁷ Before the Council could decide how to treat this demonstration, Everard and Winstanley appeared before them of their own accord, ready to justify their conduct. They insisted on keeping their hats on in Fairfax's presence, declaring that he was their fellow creature, and then proceeded to outline a programme which differed considerably from the rough and ready appeals to custom which had been the chief battle cry of earlier agrarian agitators. They declared "that as God had promised to make the barren land fruitful, so now what they did was to renew the ancient community of enjoying the fruits of the earth, and to distribute the benefits thereof to the poor and needy, and to feed the hungry and clothe the naked". They did not intend to invade private property, "but only to meddle with what was common and untilled and to make it fruitful for the use of man," but they prophesied that a time would come when all men would voluntarily give up their estates.¹²⁸

Throughout the summer of 1649 the Diggers remained at work on St. George's Hill, the Government probably reflecting that it had little to fear from men who refused to include physical force among their weapons. But, in the autumn, a company of soldiers was sent to pull down the wooden houses in which Winstanley and his followers had been living. Winstanley, recounting this incident a year later, declared: "And the poor tenants that pulled down that house durst do no other, because the landlords and Lords looked on. . . . And when the poor enforced slaves had pulled down the house, then the Lords gave them ten shillings to drink and there they smiled one upon another; being fearfull, like a dog that is kept in awe, when his Master gives him a bone, and stands over him with a whip, he will eat, and look up, and twinch his tail; for they durst not laugh out, lest their Lords should hear they jeered them openly, for in their hearts they are Diggers."¹²⁹ The work of these soldiers, from whose sheepish grins Winstanley drew comfort, seems to have put an end to the practical activities of the Diggers. The immediate effects of their agrarian crusade

were not widespread. But, in 1649, "the middle sort of men" within the three Chiltern Hundreds acclaimed their advent with enthusiasm, and declared that they themselves had long waited for the downfall of the priests, lawyers, patentee-men, and lords of manors. They now resolved "to aid and assist the poor in regaining all their Rights, Dues, etc., that do belong unto them, and detained from them by any tyrant whatsoever. And likewise will further and help the said poor to manure, dig, etc., the said Commons and to sell those woods growing thereon to help them to a stock."¹³⁰ A year later, the inhabitants of Wellinborrow, in Northamptonshire, (one of the Midland counties where enclosure proceeded rapidly) published the fact that they had begun to dig up the common ground called Bareshank. They justified their action first by an appeal to Scripture, secondly by calling attention to the logical outcome of a political development which aimed at making England a free Commonwealth, and thirdly by appeal to the law of necessity.¹³¹

These and similar activities aroused the Government's alarm. In April, 1650, the Council of State wrote to the Northamptonshire justices that they approved of their proceedings against the Levellers in those parts, and were of opinion that, if the laws were strictly enforced against those who violated the rights of property, all would be well.¹³² Two months later, the Lord General was ordered to appoint a troop of horse to be quartered in Gloucestershire, to prevent the "rude multitude" who were gathered there from doing any further damage to private estates. It was also decided to instruct the Gloucestershire justices to examine any miscarriages in cases which concerned the levelling of enclosures, and to send for the ringleaders.¹³³ Sir John Pershouse wrote to the Council in 1653 concerning a riot at Walsall, and urged that the offenders should be punished with due severity.¹³⁴ It is probable that all these outbursts were inspired in greater or less degree by the Diggers' movement, and some of the phrases used by Winstanley and his followers penetrated as far north as Cumberland, for in 1654 the tenants of Thomas Dyke of Wartbole reminded the Council that their day of deliverance had arrived with the overthrow of "ye late monarchy of Norman race".¹³⁵

Taken alone, the practical achievements of the Diggers and their scanty band of disciples would have had little lasting importance. Viewed from one angle, their agitation was the last of a series of ineffectual attempts to overthrow

enclosure, which had its roots in the peasants' revolts of the later Middle Ages. Such risings no longer caused the Government any serious anxiety. With no principle to appeal to beyond that of an "ancient custom", which varied from manor to manor, and no sort of unified leadership, they subsided quickly, leaving few traces behind them. It is probable that the rank and file of the Diggers were influenced by motives not unlike those which had sent their forefathers to the Oak of Reformation on Mousehold Hill; but it is certain that Winstanley, and possibly other leaders of the movement, were inspired by a comprehensive social philosophy, which marked a definite break with the past and endured long after the Diggers had left St. George's Hill.

The inadequacy of political democracy without social reform, though unrecognized by the leaders of the Great Rebellion, was clearly brought out by Winstanley in his remarks to the Lord General and Council of War. "Wee know that England cannott bee a free Commonwealth," he declared, "unless all the poore commoners have a free use and benefitt of the land; for if this freedome bee not granted, wee that are the poore commoners are in a worse case than we were in the King's dayes, for then wee had some estate about us, though wee were under oppression, but now our estates are spent to purchase freedome, and wee are under oppression still of Lords of Mannours' tyranny."¹³⁶ Winstanley protested against the way in which men concentrated their attention on the evils of political monopoly. "The kingly power," he said, "is covetousness in its branches, or power of self-love ruling in one or in many men over others, and enslaving those who in the Creation are their equals." There were three main branches of kingly power which had been neglected by the leaders of the Rebellion, and these were the power of tithing priests, the power of lords of manors, and the oppression of bad laws.¹³⁷ The self-satisfaction of those who claimed to have delivered England from oppression had little real justification. "O thou powers of England, though thou hast promised to make this People a Free People, yet thou hast so handled the matter through thy self-seeking humour that thou hast wrapped us up more in bondage." According to Winstanley, England would not be a free Commonwealth till the poor, who had no land, were allowed to cultivate the commons and to live as comfortably as the landlords.¹³⁸

A century before Rousseau wrote his *Discourse on*

Inequality, Winstanley examined existing institutions in the light of Nature and Reason and found them evil. Influenced by the self-conscious religion of the Puritan sects, he differed from Rousseau in seeing the "natural man" as a direct emanation from God. In the beginning, men were created by God's word, and the word dwelt among them and became their light. "This light I take to be that pure spirit in man which we call Reason, which discusseth things right and reflecteth, which we call conscience; from all which there issued out that golden rule or law which we call equitie."¹³⁹ During the Golden Age which followed the Creation, man exercised dominion over the beasts of the field, but not over his own kind. Equality was not founded on the brutish degradation described by Hobbes, but on the common divinity which dwelt in all men. Private property was unknown in this society, but had its origin in the conquest of the life of the spirit by fleshly lusts. When man "began to delight himself in the objects of Creation more than in the spirit of Reason and Righteousness", the time was ripe for the work of the encloser.¹⁴⁰

It was unlikely that arguments drawn from the rarefied heights of Nature and Reason would prove a popular battle-cry. In the appeal to all Englishmen to unite in destroying the Norman power, the abstract was made concrete, and the theory of a Golden Age and Fall was given decent English clothing. Winstanley frequently referred to the fall of the Norman power, but the most single-hearted exponent of this theory was John Hare. The picture of the free and equal Teuton impressed him as deeply as it was later to impress some constitutional historians. He declared that, after the Roman Empire had fallen, "scarcely was there any worth or manhood left in these occidental nations, after their so long servitude under the Roman yoke, till these new supplies of free-born men from Germany reinfused the same and reinforced the servile body of the west with a spirit of honour and magnanimity."¹⁴¹ But, with the coming of the Norman Conqueror, the English nation lost its ancient liberties. Norman soldiers were granted land and power, their successors became tyrannical lords of manors, and Norman laws were made to uphold the power which they had usurped.¹⁴² But Charles I's defeat had destroyed the Norman tyranny and power had returned to the people.¹⁴³

The right of the common people to share in the fruits of victory was put on a more practical basis by the theory of

a contract made between the people and their rulers to throw off the Norman yoke. In his letter to Lord Fairfax and the Council, Winstanley stated that "everyone without exception by the law of contract ought to have liberty to enjoy the earth for his livelihood, and to settle his dwelling in any part of the commons of England without buying or renting land of any, seeing everyone by agreement and covenant among themselves have paid taxes, given free quarter and adventured their lives to recover England out of bondage".¹⁴⁴ The people were to enter into their inheritance by peaceful means, for "freedom gotten by the sword is an established bondage to some part or other of creation".¹⁴⁵

Though peaceful, the Diggers' penetration was intended to be wide. Agrarian reform was the thin end of a wedge, which would loosen the foundations of an old world dominated by lust and aggression and make way for a New Jerusalem ruled by the spirit of love. Winstanley's firm belief that the divine spirit was present in man gave him better grounds than most modern reformers possess for hoping to change human nature through the reform of institutions. He declared that, with the removal of private property in land, the main source of greed would be destroyed and a better atmosphere would prevail both in national and international affairs. The spirit of domination was encouraged by the way in which poor men were forced to "go with cap in hand and bended knee to Gentlemen and farmers, begging and entreating to work with them for eightpence or tenpence a day, which doth given them occasion to tyrannize over poor people (which are their fellow Creatures)". If the unemployed and those who worked for starvation wages would turn their hands to digging up the commons, then the rich farmers and landlords would not be able to exploit their cheap labour. The lords themselves would benefit by the change, for "then would they want those great baggs of money, which do maintain pride, Idleness and Fulness of Bread, which are carried unto them by their Tenants, who go in as slavish a posture as may be; namely with Cap in hand and bended knee, crouching and creeping from corner to corner, while the Lord walkes up and down the roome with his proud lookes, and with great swelling words, questions him about his holding".¹⁴⁶

The Diggers maintained that many social evils had sprung from the roots of dominion and lordship and would perish with them. Private property was the cause of a great

deal of crime, for "first it hath occasioned people to steal one from another. Secondly it hath made lords to hang those that did steal. It tempts people to do an evil action and then kills them for doing it."¹⁴⁷ Winstanley noticed that the covetousness of the individual and the nation reacted upon each other, and were likely to stand or fall together. He says: "I demand whether all wars, bloodshed and misery came not upon the creation when one man endeavoured to be a lord over another? . . . And whether this misery shall not remove (and not till then) when all the branches of mankind shall look upon themselves as one man, and upon the earth as a common treasury to all, without respecting persons."¹⁴⁸

It is difficult to measure the extent of the Diggers' influence on their contemporaries. When Englishmen are driven to imitate their continental neighbours, and leave the well-ploughed fields of practical activity for the less secure heights of theory and first principles, it is a sure sign that something is very rotten in the state. The agrarian agitation under the Commonwealth was produced by the reaction of democratic thought and religious enthusiasm on practical evils. The Diggers' movement was not a mere Utopian fantasy, remote from reality, and holding little interest for ordinary men. It offered a solution, however revolutionary, of problems which had baffled statesmen for the last two centuries, and which had become more acute as a result of the civil wars. Nor is it likely that the solution which the Diggers proposed would fall on altogether unreceptive ears. A people who had heard themselves appealed to as the source of all authority,¹⁴⁹ and who had taken part in the struggle against the King, would be impressed by a theory of social democracy. There was at the moment a vacancy in power, and a movement, more widespread than has generally been supposed, was taking place to secure a foothold for the lower sort of people. The general alarm which Winstanley's teaching excited seems to indicate that it was at least widely discussed. The word "Leveller", in its general sense, which included the Diggers, attained the same sort of comprehensive discredit which "Bolshevik" has done to-day. Nervous writers on social questions were eager to deny all trace of the damning taint.¹⁵⁰ The political Levellers hated their offspring as a Radical father hates a Socialist son, and their schemes included specific precautions against the levelling of estates.¹⁵¹ The tradesmen, conscious of their growing influence in the state, spoke their minds on "the Doctrine

of Parity or levelling, . . . a notion that Merchants and men of great Trade are as little edified with as either the Lords are with being divested of their Honours and part in the legislative Power".¹⁵² The landed gentry, who had most to fear from levelling projects, sat calmly upon the benches of the House of Commons, ready to take strong measures if need should arise, but confident of their ability to reserve effective power for those whom Providence and the laws of England had designated as the inheritors of the Divine Right of Kings.

(III) THE ATTITUDE OF MODERATE OPINION

While Winstanley dreamed of cutting the Gordian knot of the land problem, more prosaic reformers tried to disentangle it by discussing afresh the old problem of enclosure. The mantle of Latimer fell on John Moore, a Leicestershire minister, who defended a losing cause with a conviction and ardour born of personal experience. In an age which was fast discarding the last traces of an economic theory that examined facts in the light of ethical principles, Moore insisted on subjecting enclosure to the test of morality. Men were not put in possession of their estates simply for their own enjoyment, and Moore held that it was useless to argue that a man might legally do what he liked with his own, for Christian morality imposed limitations unknown to the civil law. "Thou must look whether thou hast right in the Court of Conscience as well as in the Court of Law. Whether thou hast right in the Consistory of God as well as in the Common-pleas of men. What, mayst thou do with thine own what thou listest? No; thou must doe what God would have thee to do with it."

Moore declared that the self-seeking landlord sinned against God and man, for, as a result of his ruthless enclosure of common land and open-field strips, both countryside and market town were thronged with homeless beggars. Four main classes suffered by enclosure—tenants, cottiers, the children of both, and those who dared to raise their voices against an evil which they were powerless to prevent. The tenants were the first to feel the blow. They were discharged from their old occupation of tilling, and turned adrift to swell that class of landless men whose increase was one of the most significant indications of the change which was coming over rural life. Moore spoke from first-hand experience

in Leicestershire, where the predominance of agriculture over other occupations made the tenants' case far harder than in counties such as Kent or Essex, "where they have other callings and trades to maintain their Country by . . ." ¹⁵³

In Leicestershire, the landless man wanders drearily from town to town, seeking fruitlessly for a little farm which will enable him to earn a livelihood in the only way he knows. The markets are full of enquiries: "Can you help me to a farm, or a little land to imploy my team? I am discharged, and if I sell my Horses and Cattel I shall never get a team again, or so many Milk-cowes to maintain my family. Alas, all my money will be spent that I shall sell them for, ere I shall hear of any land to be let." But all likely land in the neighbourhood is seized upon by the enclosers themselves, for they can afford to pay a far higher rent than the poor tenant, who is at last forced to beg the bread which he cannot obtain by more legitimate means. "Question many of our Beggars that go from dore to dore with wife and children after them, where they dwell and why they go a-begging. Alas, master (say they) we were forced out of such a Town when it was inclosed, and since we have continued a generation of Beggars." The cottiers, who earned their living in work connected with the plough, are now cast adrift, and wander towards the nearest open field village. Thus, it comes about that the open-field towns have above double the number of cottiers they used to have, and are hard put to it to provide for the poor which the enclosures have made. The children, both of tenants and cottiers, were formerly employed as servants to the husbandmen, but now, instead of 30, 40 or 50 servants in a town, there are only 3. ¹⁵⁴

Moore was confident that, in the evils of enclosure, he had put his finger on the root cause of that increased poverty and vagrancy which were exercising the minds of statesmen and reformers. Just as some nineteenth century factory-owners used the profits from underpaid labour to build charitable institutions to deal with its effects, so the enclosers of the seventeenth century paid increased poor rates to relieve the herd of paupers which their depopulation created. Moore points out the futile hypocrisy of this policy. "They talke much of the poor, but they do nothing to the purpose in respect of that they rob them of; . . . and their gratuity usually as it reacheth but a few and in some smal trifle, so it lasteth but for a while." ¹⁵⁵

Though dogmatic in stating facts, Moore was inclined

to be chary of putting forward a definite anti-enclosure theory. He is always a plain countryman, roused to unaccustomed eloquence by the suffering he sees around him, and he continually falls back on an appeal to evident, but unexplained facts. "If the Lord Protector should impanel a Jury of all the honest hearts in Leicestershire and Northamptonshire and Counties adjacent, they must bring therein a Verdict against such Inclosure, guilty of Depopulation and decay of Tillage generally, very few if any at all excepted. Our proof is De Facto, it is so."¹⁵⁶ Yet Moore gives a loophole to his opponents by admitting that enclosure, as such, is not a sin, and that depopulation is not a necessary part of the enclosers' policy, though in practice the facts which he has described have usually resulted from it.¹⁵⁷

Only one other writer, a certain H. Halhead, joined Moore in condemning enclosure. He, too, finds the root cause of the evils resulting from enclosure hard to define, but he insists that the evils themselves are apparent to everyone. The hospitality for which England used to be justly famous has fallen into decay, now that it is left to the calculating mercies of the new landlords. "Neither do enclosers keep a house according to their estates; but many a Farmer spends as much as they. When these places were all Champion Countries, many a stiver of bread was given, but now all such Liberality is laid by, and a fair house is set up, with goodly Demesnes, but no Hospitality at all." Halhead agrees with Moore in deploring the fact that market towns are overcrowded with men made desperate by lack of home and employment, but he says that the case of those who remain on the encloser's estate is far worse. Moore had complained of that "*absentéisme de coeur*" which characterized the French seigneur of the eighteenth century, but Halhead complained of actual absenteeism. "For there is some Bailiff set over them, that is like to the Fuller that dresseth Northern Cloth; they do so wrack them, and straine them, that at length they break their hearts . . . And the Landlord (being absent from them) dwelling in London, or elsewhere, little condoles their misery, so that these poor Tennants know not to whom to complain." Halhead admits that against these sufferings must be balanced the good effects of enclosure, but he remarks that many reforms that are usually regarded as inseparable from it can be carried out in common fields.

Moore and Halhead were solitary voices crying in a land

which was beginning to appreciate the teaching of agricultural scientists and reformers, and was not likely to listen to appeals from unpractical ministers of the gospel, Moore weakened his case by a moderation which his opponents interpreted as inconsistency. "Pseudonismus" seized on his admission that there was no inherent evil in enclosure, and accused him of wilfully blinding himself to the true facts of the case. Moore's vivid and obviously sincere description of the sufferings of the Leicestershire tenants and cottagers must have made some impression on contemporaries, but half the poignancy would vanish when his readers turned to the page on which he admitted that such distress was not an inevitable consequence of enclosure. Men would comfort themselves by reflecting that, in their county, things were better managed than in Leicestershire, and would turn with relief to the less harrowing pages of the *Reformed Husbandman*, which described various ways in which agriculture might be made more profitable.¹⁶⁰

Pseudonismus answered Moore's indictment less by disputing his facts than by burying them beneath a mass of counter-assertions. Even in the sixteenth century, many writers had been ready to admit the disadvantages of the open-field system which, originating at a time when agricultural methods were regarded as static, put many obstacles in the way of improvement. These disadvantages were yet clearer to Pseudonismus. He declared that, when the land was unenclosed, the cattle wandered freely over the common land in winter and did much damage with their heavy feet. Sheep did not yield so much wool and were liable to rot, while efficient manuring was impossible.

Far from being beneficial to the small tenant, the open-field system gave many opportunities for the rich and strong to tyrannize over the poor and weak. "Thus, where fields lie open and the land is used in common, he that is rich and full stocked eateth with his cattle not in his own part onely, but likewise his neighbours, who is poor and out of stock." Some of those who protested most loudly against enclosure "are such as have been accustomed unto, or desire they may have liberty, to practise such licentious courses".¹⁶¹ A writer known as "S.T." agreed with Pseudonismus in thinking that the benefit of common rights was often illusory, for tenants profited by them only if they lived near the commons and could look after their own interests, "by which means there is a petty tyranny exercised".¹⁶²

According to its apologists, the great advantage of enclosure lay in the opportunity for improved cultivation which it afforded. "Where grounds are enclosed, both grounds and cattle may be severally used, as is fittest for each; store cattle may be put on grounds that are fittest for store, and feeding cattle upon feeding grounds." The decay of tillage does not necessarily follow enclosure, and, indeed, the very opposite results should be expected because of the wider opportunities for alternative cultivation which enclosure allows.¹⁶³ A writer called Adam Moore agreed with this view and prophesied that arable and pasture would no longer engage in needless strife, but "emulate and strive to outdo each other in storing the Commonwealth with their abundant fruits".¹⁶⁴

The conflict between Pseudonismus and J. Moore was fundamental, for they looked on the same world from opposite angles. While one saw only the prosperity which would follow on the technical improvements made possible by enclosure, the other was absorbed by the poverty and suffering which might come in their wake. If Moore laid himself open to the charge of obstructive conservatism, Pseudonismus might have been called heartless by an older generation who considered the immediate interests of the peasantry before agricultural progress. The contrast between the two points of view comes out most clearly in their attitude towards the lower section of the peasantry. Where Moore saw growing numbers of homeless wanderers who deserved pity and help, Pseudonismus saw wilful idlers who deserved punishment. He complained of the "new brood of upstart intruders" who lived in unlawful cottages upon what they could beg or steal.¹⁶⁵ He rebuked Moore for his ridiculous assumption "that all Tennants and Cottiers in comparison of Landlords and husbandmen are poor. Woeful experience shows the contrary, that the greedy griping Tenant many times is richer than the open, free-hearted and free-handed Landlord, and the insolent, prooling pilfering Cottier than the honest, harmlesse, modest, painfull husbandman."¹⁶⁶ "S.T." shelved the whole question of the effects of enclosure on the poor by remarking that, in any case, they would be better employed in some manufacture, such as spinning, than in lazing about the commons and bringing up their children in idleness.¹⁶⁷

This lack of consideration towards the effect of enclosure

on the peasantry was one symptom of an important change which was taking place in men's conceptions of social right and expediency. To most writers and statesmen of the sixteenth century, the peasantry themselves were the most important factor to be considered when the pros and cons of an agrarian policy were debated. National prosperity could not be conceived of except in terms of the individuals who made up the nation, and of these the most important were the tillers of the soil. But, by the time of the Commonwealth, men were beginning to reckon prosperity in terms of pounds sterling, and were becoming used to the idea of sacrificing human life to the deity of increased production. Pseudonismus insists that the land cannot be cultivated so as to employ the maximum number of people, for such a policy would involve opposition to all mechanical improvements. He asks: "Must present Mischiefs, such as the abuses of common fields are, be perpetually continued without Redresse because there is a possibility of an after inconvenience?"¹⁶⁸ Lee agreed that it was useless to attempt to stem the tide of progress,¹⁶⁹ and Pseudonismus put forward the comfortable theory that agrarian troubles would be solved automatically with the advent of increased profits, since rack renting would be unable to hurt those who were drawing a good return from the land.¹⁷⁰

Pseudonismus played the part of a commonsense observer in refuting Moore's arguments. Joseph Lee like Moore a minister of religion, showed that the ethics on which they were based were hopelessly out of date. He believed that men were right in submitting to no other guidance than that of appetite, for "may not everyone lawfully put his commodity to the best advantage, provided he do it without prejudice to others? Do not all tradesmen cast to lay out their money upon such wares as will be most advantageous to themselves? Have not Landholders as much reason, and may they not with as good conscience put their land to the best advantage?"¹⁷¹ The tradesman had formerly been considered a slippery fellow, who was unusually prone to follow a selfish and dishonest line of conduct, and it is significant that Lee should have held him up as an example to the landowner. According to Lee, the law of self-interest had already permeated every section of the community, for "wheresoever there is the least want of corn and men's land is fit to bear corn, men will plow up their inclosed land for their own profit; it's an undeniable maxime,

That everyone by the light of nature and reason will do that which makes for his own greatest advantage".¹⁷²

While Joseph Lee anticipated the ethics of the eighteenth century, "S.T." and Adam Moore examined the agrarian problem in the light of a philosophy of reason and common sense. Moore insisted that private property answered to a deep-rooted instinct in human nature, which would be frustrated if common land were allowed to continue. "Doth not every man covet to have his own alone? Would any man admit of a partaker in his house, his horse, his ox or his wife, if he could shun it?"¹⁷³ "S.T." pointed out that the clear voice of reason must not be allowed to subside amid the confused babblings of custom, and, if necessary, its dictates should be enforced in the teeth of opposition from the always unreasonable multitude. "If this doth but prepare the minds of some countrymen (who are now led more by Tradition than Reason) . . . to a willingness when those that are in authority (and trustees for their goods) shall do them good against their will (for against the wills of many it must be, or else it never will be) . . . if so, then my labour will not be lost."¹⁷⁴

Those who supported enclosure had on their side all the advantages of a constructive programme, and were backed by an increasingly popular interpretation of religion and philosophy. The disadvantages of open-field cultivation and the benefits which followed enclosure were too frequently insisted upon to be by any means negligible. Dugdale, writing in 1662, looked on enclosure as one of the most hopeful signs of the times,¹⁷⁵ and Hartlib, who cannot be accused of indifference to the poor, remarked with approval on the change of opinion which had taken place, "for now we suppose (and not without cause) that Enclosing is an Improvement."¹⁷⁶ Henry Best, in his account of Yorkshire farming in 1641, speaks of the rising value of enclosed lands. Lands in the pasture, which were let at his father's first coming for 2s. a land, will now, since their enclosure, let for twice as much. Again, a certain Alice Edwards used to let her lands for 2s. 6d., but, since they have been enclosed, she has let them for 7s. and 7s. 6d.¹⁷⁷ Tenants themselves sometimes pressed for enclosure, and thus, in 1656, the lord of the manor of Eagle in Lincolnshire received a petition from his tenants, urging that their lands should be enclosed without delay. They described the wretched condition of the town and its inhabitants, declaring that out of 1,300 acres, 700 were not

worth 6*d.* an acre yearly as they were now cultivated. Out of sixty families, numbering about 330 persons in all, eighteen had to receive alms from the parish, while no land had been held for two generations without the owners being forced to sell, borrow or mortgage. The cause of all this trouble was the continuance of common land, "our mores and coman not able to keepe halfe the stinte our stocke pine and selves much wronged, the keeping and seeking our catle more then the worke the continuall charge labor and vexation that wee are at with our catle trespassinge upon others is intolerable, and without enclosing unavoydable; for these causes we are inforced to improve, which wee suppose neyther reason or law can or will denye." The lord of the manor consented, and in 1665 it was agreed that the three fields and two moors belonging to Eagle should be enclosed.¹⁷⁸

It would be unfair to suggest that the progressive writers were altogether blind to the necessity for protecting the peasantry. Some of them proposed that a fixed proportion of land should be allotted to all those whose estates were involved in an enclosure. "S.T." wished to give three-quarters of the enclosed land to the freeholders, and divide the rest among the poor and the cottagers,¹⁷⁹ while, in the case of commons, the author of *Chaos* allotted one quarter to the poor, one quarter to the lord and half to the commoners.¹⁸⁰ The author of the *Waste Land's Improvement* put forward the most original suggestion of how to move forward in one direction without slipping backward in another, and in 1653 he placed his scheme before the Committee for the Advancement of Trade. He agreed with the progressive writers in deploring the fact that large tracts of undeveloped land still existed, and he held that the improvement of this land would do away with a great deal of poverty and unemployment. Leases distributed over a term of ninety or a hundred years "would set multitudes of hands to digging, manuring and planting, . . . which would be like unto, and instead of, a manufacture to set awork multitudes in all corners of the Nation". To prevent the abuses which had hitherto attended enclosure, the enclosed lands would remain for ever in the possession of the state. Thus, effective provision could be made for all men to receive full compensation, and those who had enjoyed common rights were to have the first offer of leases, before the rich, "for the truth is they have suffered already too much face grinding from them." This predominance of public good over private interest was

to be perpetual, and the land was never to be allowed to "resolve into particular interests and properties, but that it should be employed wholly in name and behalf of the public, for the sole use and service of the Commonwealth".¹⁸¹ There is no evidence that the Committee for the Advancement of Trade considered this scheme seriously, and it is chiefly interesting as being one of the earliest attempts to replace the mediaeval control of the village community by the modern control of the state.

The real difficulty in the way of any effective scheme of control or limitation lay in the prevailing temper of the enclosers themselves, and of the landowning classes who now dominated the Government. The introduction to Halhead's pamphlet declared that "All men may see there is a fault among us. And when God comes to judge . . . he will finde means in every man's Conscience to convince and reprove them wherein they have served their Covetousness in pretence of necessary Accommodation".¹⁸² For a century past, the main business of enclosure had been in the hands of men who looked on their manors and farms primarily from the point of view of their own financial interest. This attitude had so far been strenuously opposed by those in authority in Church and State. Now, the philosophy popularized by "S.T." and the religion interpreted by Joseph Lee consecrated a development which had hitherto gone unshriven by the Church and unrecognized by the philosopher.

The agricultural experts did not trouble their heads over philosophy and religion, for they were confident that the new gospel of increased productivity which they preached would, by itself, cure all human ills. Plattes condemned the Wars of Religion for their unproductiveness, and declared that the world had wasted far too much time and energy in fighting for mere opinions and ideals, which were all very well in their proper place, but should not be allowed to interfere with the serious business of life. Religious toleration was necessary for economic reasons, "for the law of Nature doth complie with the generall profite, which this doctrine" (that of enforcing religious beliefs) "doth thwart extraordinarily; thereby shewing itselfe to be false and frivolous."¹⁸³

The problem of pauperism would be solved by enabling the poor to help themselves, for the need for charity had disappeared when new methods of fertilization were discovered. "He that found out the way of fertilizing of land, with Lime or Marle . . . did a more charitable deed

in publishing thereof, than if he had built all the Hospitalls in England, for the one feedeth and cloatheth a few hungry and naked persons, the other enableth an infinite number both to feed and cloath themselves and others . . .”¹⁸⁴

The lean revolutionary will vanish at the approach of the same prosperity which is to make poor laws superfluous. Writers on agricultural improvements felt in a good-humoured, after-dinner mood towards the Diggers, and were confident that they would be able to convert them to doctrines which must appeal to all sensible men. Blith says, “This parity is all I endeavour, to make the poor rich, the rich richer, and all live of the labour of their own hands,” and the vision of a state in which everyone will be much richer than before makes him break into verse :—

“Go tell the World of wealth that’s got with ease,
Of certain Profit (gain most men doth please),
Of lands improvèd to a treble worth,
A five or two fold plentys’ here held forth ;
The greedy Landlord may himself suffice,
The toiling Tenant to Estate may rise,
The poor may be enriched, England supplied,
For twice as many People to provide,
Though this a paradox may seem to you,
Experience and Reason proves it true.”¹⁸⁵

In speaking of enclosure, Blith admitted that the poor and the day labourer had little personal experience of its blessings. But, while he deplored depopulation, he was inclined to think that it was a matter better handed over to Providence and the Government. For himself, “how these things should be mended is infinitely beyond my sphere.”¹⁸⁶

All writers of this school condemned the existing attitude towards agriculture as hopelessly unscientific, and compared it unfavourably with that of the Dutch, who had achieved better results from less promising material.¹⁸⁷ “Excepting the Science of Divinity, no Science is of that antiquity, worth and excellency . . . as is this Science of Husbandry,” and it is therefore a mistake to rely entirely on the opinions of the husbandman, “whom the continuall toyle and daily care they undergoe will never suffer them to become so ingenious.”¹⁸⁸ At their best, those who preached the doctrine of increased production were not unworthy heirs of the Renaissance spirit of adventure and discovery. Hartlib* says that he finds “that it is nothing but the Narrownes

* It is probable that Hartlib was the editor, rather than the author of this and other agricultural pamphlets, with which his name is connected.

of our Spirits that makes us miserable; for if our Hearts were enlarged beyond ourselves and opened to lay hold of the Advantages which God doth offer, we might become jointly serviceable one to another".¹⁸⁹ Blith declares that it is necessary to foster experience and invention, for "all workmanship without invention resolves itself into the workman's belly, for though a new world hath been of late discovered yet there is not an occupation or trade of finding them . . ." ¹⁹⁰ One of Hartlib's favourite projects was a College of Husbandry, where men would learn to practice husbandry according to rational precepts and for the common good, instead of in the slovenly, customary fashion for mere profit. He laid down rules for the taking and training of apprentices, and for the freemen of the society.¹⁹¹

Existing methods of cultivation were severely criticized. It was said that Englishmen did not understand how to use manure properly, and one writer devoted a whole pamphlet to describing the advantages which had followed in the Weald of Kent through its judicious use, and to instructing his readers how to apply the four chief sorts of marl.¹⁹² Hartlib, anticipating Jethro Tull, thought that corn growing had decayed through the grain's being sown too thickly, and thus yielding badly, even on the best soil. Because of this small yield, so much land had to be used for arable that there was not sufficient left for pasture. Hartlib claimed to have invented an instrument which would sow corn at regular intervals and manure the ground at the same time.¹⁹³ Blith recommended the rapid alternation of arable and pasture, so that each might refresh the other, and cited the example of a piece of land near Stratford which "so runs round, grazing fits for ploughing and corning, and corning fits for grazing".¹⁹⁴ The experts were beginning to realize the importance of irrigation and draining, and Blith pointed out that excess or dearth of water would ruin otherwise good land. Exact surveys of land and water should be taken, and everyone should use a newly-discovered instrument for finding water levels.¹⁹⁵

Improved methods of agriculture would make it possible to cultivate new crops. England was exhorted to follow the example of the Low Countries and grow flax, turnips and clover-grass. The cultivation of flax would be specially profitable, for at present England imported no less than £100,000 worth of flax yearly to be manufactured in Lancashire.¹⁹⁶ Cabbages, carrots, onions, parsnips, artichokes

and turnips were among the new crops which Blith advocated.¹⁹⁷ One writer believed that England's salvation lay in fruit trees, and suggested that their plantation should be made compulsory, and that officials should be appointed to inspect them.¹⁹⁸ Plattes thought that bees should be more generally kept, not only for the sake of profit, but also that men might be influenced by their exemplary use of the shining hour.¹⁹⁹

On one subject, all the agricultural experts were agreed. Common land, both in the form of commons and unenclosed strips, was absolutely fatal to efficient cultivation. Cressey Dymock, whose work was published under Hartlib's auspices, declared that slovenliness was the unforgivable sin, "If I should intend to lay open, the Mischievousness of Disorderliness and Confusion," he said, "I might fill a Volume; it is either the root or the effect of all the evils of this World."²⁰⁰ Blith pointed out that, when lands were held in common, inventive, industrious men were kept back by the lethargy of their neighbours, while common rights on waste and moor land led to overstocking by a few pushful men.²⁰¹

It was true that new systems of cultivation, which depended on specialization and freedom for experiment, would be hampered by survivals of an out-of-date method of agriculture which made no allowance for the modern spirit of enterprise. The weakness of the apostles of increased production was that, in their desire to give full scope to the strong, they neglected the protection of the weak and trusted to the magic of bigger returns to cure all social evils.

(IV) GOVERNMENTAL OPINION AND POLICY

Criticism of the established rights of property might proceed from such diverse sources as the study of an aristocrat and the Diggers' settlement on St. George's Hill, but within the walls of Parliament it met with a cold reception. On rare occasions, a bold speaker might point out that there was no insuperable objection to submitting property to the same criticism which had been brought to bear on other institutions. During the Parliament of 1653, the suggestion that patrons' rights of presentation should be abolished was strongly opposed by some members, but a member who recorded these proceedings declares that he was surprised that these men did not realize that Parliament had the right to interfere

with any kind of property. He says, "Sure, upon consideration, . . . these gentlemen that were so offended cannot but think otherwise, that the Parliament may, for a common good meddle with and take way property of a higher nature than presentations . . . especially when particular men's property is prejudicial to the common good."²⁰² Sentiments such as these were exceptional, and were uttered only under the influence of that unparalleled phenomenon, a Parliament of Saints.

For the most part, the attitude of good Parliament men was much the same as that of a modern Conservative. It was unthinkable that Parliament should wish to interfere with landowners' rights, but, if the impossible should happen, such interference must be nipped in the bud. Quite naturally, the dominant classes considered their own property most worthy of protection, and, already in 1641, Master Smith, of the Middle Temple, had pointed out that both liberty and prerogative must be regarded, and that, while oppression should be put down, absolute freedom was not to be desired. "We must take care," he says, "that the Common people may not carve themselves out Justice by their Multitudes. Of this wee have too frequent experience, by their breaking down inclosures and by raising other tumults to as ill purposes."²⁰³

Parliament was not alone in deprecating the extension of democratic criticism to landed property, and several writers and parties were eager to save the legislature from committing itself to a programme of agrarian revolution of which it was not likely to be guilty. One pamphleteer declared that if Parliament once altered the "legal" disposition of land, "they fayle, or fall from the Protection of the People and usurpe to themselves an absolute, Arbitrary and irregular Power . . . the Decalogue says Thou shalt not steale; Thou shalt not desire thy Neighbour's house . . ."²⁰⁴ The Levellers were anxious to place the institution of private property beyond the whims of an elected assembly. They declared that no representative body could "level men's estates, destroy property, or make all things common; and that, in all matters of such fundamental concernment there shall be a liberty to particular members of the said Representative to enter their dissents from a majority vote."²⁰⁵ Men who had purchased confiscated estates defended the rights of property with all the ardour of those who have recently acquired them. In 1654, the successors of Sir John

Stowell seem to have feared that their title would be questioned, and they therefore reminded Parliament that "it is an absolute maxim that no power can be of continuance unlesse founded on the title of Land and that foundation cannot be laid without credit to sell". They added that no agreement or understanding should be allowed to interfere with the rights of actual possession, "for it is unjust to prefer a pure Promise before property."²⁰⁶

Direct attacks on the rights of property had little chance of success within Parliament, but it was more difficult to suppress those who criticized an electoral law based upon them. When Parliament was presented with the Agreement of the People, one of the most interesting debates of the time took place.²⁰⁷ Ireton pounced upon the provision for manhood suffrage, and declared that it involved adherence to the doctrine of Natural Right. He pointed out that such adherence was contrary to the fundamental constitution of the kingdom, which insisted that a man should have a permanent interest in his country before he had a right to share in its government. The definition of "permanent interest" was given as ownership of land or membership of a corporation.

In reply to Ireton, Rainborow put forward a theory of Natural Right which is surprisingly modern. "Really," he said, "I thinke that the poorest hee that is in England hath a life to live as the greatest hee." He differed from Ireton in questioning the immutability of the electoral laws. "I doe nott finde anythinge in the law of God, that a Lord shall chuse 20 Burgesses, and a Gentleman butt two, or a poore man shall chuse none. I finde noe such thinge in the law of nature, nor in the law of nations. Butt I doe finde, that all Englishmen must bee subject to English lawes, and I doe verily believe that there is noe man butt will say, that the foundation of all law lies in the people, and if in the people, I am to seeke for this exemption."

Ireton scoffed at the idea of a birthright which entitled a man to rights and duties merely by virtue of his humanity. According to his view, a birthright did no more than constitute a claim to tolerance, the right to starve unmolested on the high road. He pointed out that, in admitting a natural claim to political rights, the way was prepared for a parallel claim to economic rights, for "by the same right of nature, hee hath an equal right in any goods hee sees : meate, drinke, cloathes, to take and use them for his sustenance."

Rainborow vainly protested that he wished only to interfere with existing political rights. His opponents saw more clearly than he did that a revision of the electoral law on the basis of natural right would inevitably lead to a criticism of those rights of property on which it was at present founded.

None of the constitutions of the Commonwealth followed Rainborow's line of reasoning, though the Instrument of Government ²⁰⁸ departed from Ireton's definition of a fixed interest by enfranchizing those with real or personal estate to the value of £200. After the Restoration, and yet more after 1688, the argument of the "stake in the country" was driven in deeper by men who regarded themselves as the inheritors of the Divine Right which the Stuarts had exercised unworthily.

A Government whose attitude towards landed property was that summarized by Ireton was not likely to interfere drastically with established rights in the interests of the peasantry. But it would be a mistake to see in the Interregnum Parliaments a body of men who allowed enclosure to take its own course from peculiarly selfish motives. All writers on agricultural reform agreed in denouncing common fields and waste grounds, and Charles I's Government had been defying influential opinion when it set up enclosure commissions. The difference was that now public policy coincided with the interests of private individuals.

Moreover, near the beginning of the Long Parliament and again during the Parliament of Saints, there were spasmodic attempts to deal with the evil effects of enclosure. In February, 1641, it was resolved to appoint a commission to settle wastes and commons, ²⁰⁹ and, a year later, when the inhabitants of Ellane in Yorkshire petitioned the Commons for redress against Sir W. Savile, he was ordered to show cause why the petitioners should not have their request granted for stopping the actions brought against them in connection with certain wastes and commons.²¹⁰ In 1653, an attempt was made to consider the enclosure problem as a whole. Parliament ordered the Committee for the Poor "to consider of the business where Inclosures have been or shall be made, how there may be a prevention of Depopulations and Decay of Tillage; and offer to the House what they shall think fit to be done therein".²¹¹ This committee seems to have reported that some action was necessary, for, in 1656, Major-General Whalley brought in a Bill touching the dividing

of commons and other matters. It was read once, but the Master of the Rolls thought it should be rejected, "for he never liked any Bill that touched upon property. It can never be made a good Bill what in itself had a tendency to any inconvenience; this the putting of the power of determining of property in three persons. Time was when I durst hardly have trusted the justice of peace with determining of a cow grass. You have good justices now: who can tell what may be hereafter?" Whalley remarked that he himself would be a loser by the Bill, since all his commons were enclosed, but "it is for the general good to prevent depopulation and discourage to the plough, which is the very support of the commonwealth. It is not to put it in these commissioners' power, but in a jury also". Mr. Fowell said roundly: "This is the most mischievous Bill that ever was offered to this House. It will wholly depopulate many, and destroy property."²¹² It was thereupon decided to reject the Bill, and thus the last comprehensive attempt on the part of the central Government to check enclosure ended in failure.²¹³

Among the Royal estates which were surveyed and sold were the King's forests, and here some attempt was made to compensate those who had common rights. In 1653, an Act was passed for the sale and improvement of the Royal forests, in which it was stated that to enclose and improve the forests would be a universal benefit. Nevertheless, certain precautions were to be taken, in order that all persons who had lawful rights might be recompensed, and that poor people, living on the borders of the forest without definite means of subsistence, might be provided for. Claims to common lands, pasture, turbary and similar rights were to be examined by the Trustees in whom the management of the land was vested, and, by way of compensation, they were to assigne what proportion of land they judged to be fair. If, within two years from the time when this land was allotted it was still left open and unenclosed, then the Trustees might survey one quarter of the whole and sell it. A certain proportion of land, called the "poor's ground", was to be set aside for the poor, and disposed of at the quarter sessions for their benefit. This land was to consist of a "competent number of acres", the exact amount being determined by the Trustees, with reference to the "quality of the poor in or near the same residing."²¹⁴ In 1657, more exact instructions were issued to the commissioners. They

were to set out distinctly how much was open and common waste ground, how much was the "proper soil of the Commonwealth", and by whom the residue was claimed. The Act named certain men who were to represent the proprietors and commoners, and two of these, in conjunction with the commissioners, were to investigate all questions of proprietary or common right. When matters of fact could not be easily determined, they were to be referred to an impartial jury, composed of freeholders of the county who lived outside the bounds of the forest. A Committee of Appeal was appointed by Parliament to hear and determine all questions which did not fall within the province of the jury.²¹⁵

Even if the Interregnum Governments had been anxious to enforce a vigorous enclosure policy, it is doubtful if they would have succeeded. The comparative success of such legislation under the Tudors and Stuarts had been due mainly to the action of the administrative courts, which did not scruple to enforce an unpopular policy, and, unlike the justices of the peace, had no direct interest in furthering enclosure. One of the first acts of the Long Parliament had been to abolish the Star Chamber and similar tribunals, and nothing had been put in their place. While the hand of the central Government had been seriously weakened, the confusion and divided loyalties which followed on the Civil Wars had disorganized a system of local government which depended on the prestige and loyalty of the country gentleman.

It is not surprising that the quarter session records of the time bear no trace of a comprehensive enclosure policy. There are many entries relating to the erection of unlawful cottages on the commons and waste,²¹⁶ but both tenants and lord usually agreed in urging the justices to take a lenient view of the case.²¹⁷ George Boothe, of Charlesworth, in Derbyshire, reported that, having no home and four children, he had built a cottage on the waste, with the consent of all the neighbours save one, but now the cottage had been pulled down. The justices ordered the delinquent to rebuild the cottage under pain of indictment.²¹⁸ The only type of enclosure which met with any general interference was the ploughing up of bits of highway and no man's land by the tenants themselves.²¹⁹ In 1656, the Orford municipal authorities passed an order to prevent the ploughing up of any highway on penalty of £5,²²⁰ and some of the

inhabitants of Exeter complained that the highways were being ruined by the making of enclosures.²²¹ The general impression left by the records is that the action of the local authorities followed the line of least resistance, by ignoring the central problem, which was that of enclosure by landlords on a large scale, and contenting itself with nibbling at the less controversial edges of the movement.

The Leicester authorities, roused by the serious effects of enclosure in their county, and probably influenced by Moore, pursued more thorough investigations. In March 1647, a meeting of commissioners was held at which it was decided to send representatives to Bushby to prevent the tenant of the town land there from meddling any further with it till he had received orders from the commissioners, and to tell the landholders concerned to come speedily to consult with the commissioners, or "they will enter on their land as before any enclosure". A week or two later, the inhabitants of Bushby presented a petition to the borough of Leicester and its commissioners desiring that the enclosure of their ground might continue, and that they might have conveyance of the Leicester ground lying within their plots, the town taking in return a piece of the Bushby land.²²²

At a meeting of the Mayor and Aldermen in 1653, a petition against depopulation was discussed, and it was agreed that the petition should be "faire ingrossed, and copies written out and hands to be gotten to the same, and then to be sent to London by Mr. Moore, Minister of Shearsby".²²³ About this time, there appears in the Leicester records a curious petition to Parliament from the "poorer sort of commonalty" in certain counties whose names are erased. They say that they have observed with thankfulness Parliament's endeavours to do justice to all, and have therefore ventured to bring to their notice one of the main reasons for the increase of poverty. Enclosing has now become so frequent that within two years there have been at least [blank] towns enclosed in Leicestershire and one other county, and yet more are in process of enclosure. As a result, "tillage doth daylie decay whereby many of the Inhabitants are constrayned either for want of worke or through cruelty of Landlords to fly to other places and especially to market townes, whereby they are not onely opprest with multitude of poore, but disabell to mainetaine them through the decay of the markett and traffique." The petitioners admit, however, that land held in common has its disadvantages,

as when, through the ignorance or malice of a few men, good tillage is prevented, "which occasion many to thinke of Inclosure as the onely Remedy for such diseases, which as it is managed by some persons proves both the overthrowe of their families which doe attempt it, and the apparent damninge of ye publike." The way to steer clear both of Scylla and Charybdis is to appoint a sort of corporation to deal with agricultural problems, no open field or village being enclosed without its full approbation, given on grounds of public policy. But when the corporation has once decided on a course of policy, it is to be pursued, even if the commoners do not give their unanimous consent.²²⁴

There seems to have been some collaboration between the Leicester authorities and the Major Generals, who were appointed by Cromwell in 1655 and given wide commissions to interfere with almost every side of life. Like the Star Chamber, they rode roughshod over private interests, and they were abolished amid general approval.²²⁵ Despite the short time they were in power, they distinguished themselves by making the last recorded attempt on the part of the accredited local authorities to check enclosure. The Leicester Corporation Hall papers include a letter directed to Mr. Moore, of Shearsby, by "S.M.M.", which states that, in accordance with the Major General's instructions, the writer is forwarding a list of places within the county where depopulation has followed on enclosure. He declares that he could add still more names to his list, and that the total thus obtained would amount to above a third part of the county. He asks Moore to send the enclosed paper to the Major General.²²⁶ Probably as a result of this information, Major General Whalley wrote from Nottingham to the Protector in April, 1656, that the grand juries of Leicestershire and Warwickshire agreed in presenting the business of enclosure. He remarks that he is sure that the rest of the counties, and especially Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire, would have done the same had they thought of it. The petitions from Leicestershire have been dealt with, to the apparent satisfaction of all parties, by an order which states that two out of three parts of their arable land are to remain for ever in tillage.²²⁷

Soon after this, the Major Generals were abolished, and with them fell the last institution which presumed to question the right of the landowners to determine their own and their tenants' interests.

The agitation of copyholders for definite rents in the place of arbitrary exactions met with temporary success during the Parliament of 1658. The committee which had been appointed to consider the reform of the law presented the draft of an Act, "for ascertaining of Arbitrary Fines upon Descent and Alienation of Copy-holds of Inheritance." This measure proposed to limit the amount of the fine to one year's rent, "and the same is hereby declared to be a reasonable fine in such case."²²⁸ Nothing more is heard of the Bill till 1656, when it was read a second time, and, like the Bill for regulating enclosure, met with its death, on the grounds that it contravened the orders of the House.²²⁹ It seems likely that, between 1652 and 1656, the landowning interest in Parliament had realized the foolishness of sacrificing a considerable part of their profits on the altar of legal equality, and now decided to beat a hasty retreat under cover of law and precedent. The copyholders were worsted in their struggle to obtain general security, and it was only isolated groups of tenants who managed to obtain a decision in Chancery that all fines "are and ought to be henceforth certain and not arbitrary at the will of the Lord."²³⁰

So far, the record of Governmental policy has been mainly negative. The rights of property were not to be interfered with, enclosure was to take its course, and copyholders would not be protected against their lords' exactions. But in the case of agricultural improvement, Parliament followed a constructive line of action. The draining and enclosure of the fens had already begun under the Stuart Governments. In 1629, Vermuyden had been given the task of draining the Great Level, but the fenmen violently opposed the project, and it required the increased energy of the Commonwealth Parliaments to carry it through. In 1649, an Act was passed confirming the drainage of the Great Level, and reciting the many advantages of a work "which will increase Manufactures, Commerce, and Trading at home and abroad, will relieve the Poor by setting them on work, and will many other ways redound to the great advantage and strengthening of the Nation".²³¹

Contemporaries were unanimous in their admiration of a policy which transformed a desert into a fertile land, and they had little sympathy for the fenmen, who seem to have preferred a precarious independence in the desert to a more prosperous dependence on the reclaimed lands. The Isle of Axholme was at once the scene of striking improvements

and fierce opposition. "Before this drayning," writes Dugdale, "the Country thereabouts was full of wandring Beggars; but very few afterwards; being set on work in weeding of Corn, burning of ground, thrashing, ditching, Harvest work, and other Husbandry; All wages of Labourers, by reason of this great use of them, being then doubled." Reclaimed land in Harey Carr, which had been sown with rape seed, had increased in value from 6d. to 10s. an acre. Everywhere rich soil had been reclaimed, and in the marshes beyond Wainfleet it was hard to find a poor man, though rents were high.²³²

The reclaiming of the fens marked an important stage in the history of agricultural progress. Against the advantages of this progress must be balanced the almost unanimous cry of protest which went up from the dwellers in the fen country. The inhabitants of East Holland and Sibsey make a long tale of their sufferings. They say that, for time out of mind, they have enjoyed free common for all their cattle, and rights of turbary and other profits in the east and west fens, and, because of this, "multitudes of people have been induced to live in these unwholesome parts". But lately, the covetous eyes of Sir Anthony Thomas fell on their land. He declared that the fens were harmfully surrounded, and ten years ago managed to get himself appointed chief undertaker for draining the land. The first commission gave him permission to drain only the east fen, and thereupon he and his confederates, "more intending to add to their estates by getting great shares out of the West fen and other grounds, which were good and rich grounds, than to advance public good by improving bad ground," produced a second commission, which acted in an illegal fashion and granted them all they asked.²³³

The men of Huntingdon presented several petitions describing the evil effects of the Adventurers' ²³⁴ policy, and declaring that, even when an inquiry was ordered, they managed to evade it.²³⁵ The inhabitants of Overton, in Huntingdonshire, recount how an agreement was made in the late King's reign between the Earl of Bedford and the Commissioners of Sewers, whereby the Earl was to undertake to drain the Great Level, "and was for recompense to have 5,000 acres sett out, with this caution, that the lands left to the Commoners should be nearest to their dwelling." But a certain Sir Charles Herbert "did of his owne authority, without directions from the commissioners" alter the said

agreement, and take over all the land nearest the commoners' houses, "whereby your petitioners are wholly deprived of any maintenance for their milk cows which were their chief relieve . . ." ²³⁶

In the Isle of Axholme, discontent with the Adventurers' proceedings blazed into a series of riots, one of which received encouragement from the indefatigable John Lilburne.²³⁷ The freeholders and commoners put forward their case in a pamphlet of 1653, in which they stated that 7,400 acres of commonable land had been taken from them by the Adventurers about twenty years ago. They began legal proceedings in 1645, and in 1650 their bill came to full hearing, "and the Decree then made doth establish the possession no otherwise with the Participants then it was when that Bill was exhibited." But now the attention of the Government is concentrated on the riots which have lately taken place, and "the equitable part of the Cause" will never come to view.²³⁸ Daniel Noddell, the solicitor for the Epworth commoners, made the same complaint to Parliament, pointing out that, while everyone had heard of the great riot which had taken place there, few men realized that the freeholders had also attempted to secure their rights by peaceful means. Noddell stated that in 1650 a decree in Exchequer awarded 4,000 acres out of the 7,400 to the tenants, and instructed them to go to law for the rest.²³⁹

The Adventurers stated their case through William Say and Henry Darley, who described how, at the expense of £175,046 they had drained 60,000 acres of land. They had remained for ten years in quiet possession of 7,400 acres in the manor of Epworth, but in 1642 a band of rioters broke down their fences, put in cattle, and did much destruction. A decree was made in Exchequer for establishing the Adventurers' possession, but the fenmen, acting under the influence of Lilburne, Wildman and Noddell, declared that they would not listen to any such orders of the Exchequer or Parliament, "some saying it was a Parliament of clouts." Thereupon, they proceeded to deface the church and demolish the whole town of Santoft.²⁴⁰

A Parliamentary committee considered the rival claims, and in July, 1653, Major General Lambert and Henry Scobell told the Council of State that, after considering the committee's report, they thought that the 7,400 acres should be settled in the possession of the Adventurers. To avoid trouble, special commissions should be issued to the justices

of assize to try rioters. Moreover, since the work of drainage was so advantageous to the commonwealth, a Bill should be brought in to confirm it.²⁴¹ Probably in accordance with this recommendation, the Lord General and Council of State announced that, owing to the many riots in the Great Level, they had decided to set up commissioners to investigate the conditions and decide all disputes which might arise with reference to the work of draining. Henceforth, if rioters continued in their evil ways, they were to be looked upon as disturbers of the peace and dealt with accordingly.²⁴²

While the property of the considerable landowner was treated by Parliament as an absolute right, the fenmen's property did not meet with the same respect, and the quicker witted among the dispossessed peasants pointed out that goose and gander deserved the same sauce. They say that, "forasmuch as by the whole current of all your Declarations, the end of the late Warres was to maintaine, defend, and secure our Properties and Fundamentall Legal Rights, and not in the least destroy," the present destruction of property rights, however humble, is contrary to the letter and the spirit of the Parliamentary cause.²⁴³ But Parliament made it clear to the fenmen that there was property and property, and that, while one sort was rightly free from interference, the other might be interfered with if necessity arose. In reply to a petition against enclosure, they declared, "It is a cleare mistake in the petitioners . . . for that wee conceive it is and ought to bee the care of the Supream power to provide for the good of the whole and to cause every man soe to use his owne as it may bee serviceable to ye comon good, yet with as little prejudice to each particuler as may bee."²⁴³

During the Commonwealth, agrarian development entered upon a new stage. The machinery which the Tudors and Stuarts had utilized to restrain the free progress of enclosure was weakened or destroyed, and there was no keen desire to revive it. With the growth of economic individualism,²⁴⁴ distrust of the unfettered action of the landowner disappeared. The magnitude of the changes in rural conditions and social theory which had taken place during the Interregnum became apparent at the Restoration. Enclosure by Chancery decree was pushed rapidly forward. In 1664, a Bill to enclose commons and waste land was introduced Into the Commons, and referred only by 105 votes to 94. In 1666, a Bill "for confirming of enclosures made by decrees

in Courts of Equity" was introduced into the Lords, but dropped in committee.²⁴⁵ Houghton, writing in 1681, speaks of the many enclosures which "have of late been made, and that people daily are on gog on making, and the more, I dare say, would follow would they that are concerned and understand it daily persuade their neighbours". He goes on to urge the need for an Enclosure Bill which will render persuasion more effective.²⁴⁶

Few voices were raised on the side of the peasant, and it was generally assumed that the agrarian changes were all for his good. Occasionally, some writer would indicate another side of the picture, as when Roger North declared that one of the greatest difficulties with which a lawyer had to cope was that of satisfying greedy landowners. To him, it was a miserable sight to watch the court-keepers screwing fines out of poor copyholders, and to see small holdings, which had been in the family for generations, being swallowed up by fees. North echoes the Commonwealth reformers in suggesting that copyhold should be abolished, and he adds significantly, "that perhaps may tend to some repopulation, which is more needed than any means of extortion."²⁴⁷

A special interest attaches to the last tract published by Richard Baxter, which has only recently been discovered. This tract is called the *Poor Husbandman's Advocate to Rich Racking Landlords*, and is the lament of an unusually consistent Puritan over a social evil which he had at one time hoped to check, but which had now slipped beyond his control. "The husbandmen," he says, "are the Stamen of the Commonwealth. All the rest do live by them . . . And yet whose case is so hard as theirs? Gentlemen say, oure Land is our owne, and he that will give most for it shall be our tenant." The custom used to be to let lands for periods of lives or a long term of years, but now, in most counties, yearly rack rents predominate. Poor husbandmen are little better off than slaves, "for none are so servilely dependant (save household servants and ambitious expectants) as they are on their landlords. They dare not displease them lest they turn them out of their howses; or increase their rents. I believe that their great Landlords have more command of them than the King hath." Baxter stressed the spiritual as well as the material consequences of this enslavement. Tired out with his constant and unavailing labours, the husbandman was unlikely to wish to exhaust himself still further by study or devotion, "The soule is here so tyed to

the body that it hath constant need of its right temperament for its due operation : a heavy body tired with labour is like a tired horse to a traveller, or a Lute out of tune to a musician, or a knife or toole to cut or worke with that wants an edge." The sad condition of the peasant seemed to Baxter to be a matter of public responsibility rather than of private benevolence. "Think not this a matter of small importance," he urged, "as if it were but relieving a Lazarus at your doores . . . It is of publike consequence and of spirituall and everlasting concernment."²⁴⁸ This tract, probably the last of a series which for two hundred years had urged the encloser to pause and give thought, is at once an epitaph on past endeavours, and a comment on the agrarian policy of the new age.

CHAPTER IV

INDUSTRIAL POLICIES AND DEVELOPMENTS

“ Projects, Monopolies . . . are together with the Court, the fountain of them, removed, and a Free Trade, with Incouragement of Manufactures and provision for the poor will be settled by the Commonwealth, whereunto the same is most agreeable and which the former Government had never yet leisure effectually to do.”

Declaration of the Parliament of England, 1648.

(I) THE ATTACK ON MONOPOLIES

(a) INDUSTRIAL MONOPOLIES

THE outburst against industrial and commercial monopolies¹ is perhaps the most characteristic feature of the economic and social history of the Interregnum. In one sense, every attempted reform of the time—the agitation for land reform, for legal simplification, for industrial democracy—was anti-monopolistic, but, in the present case, the issue was clearly defined and the movement commanded almost universal support. In the sphere of industrial history, there is no doubt that the virtual abolition of monopolies was the most concrete and successful development which took place between 1640 and 1660.

“ Monopoly ” was an elastic term, which was applied to very different forms of organization. In so far as it restricted a certain industry to a limited number of men and forced them to exercise it under definite conditions, it was entirely in accordance with traditional views on the conduct of industry. But the characteristic mark of monopolies under the Tudors, and still more under the Stuarts, was their close connection with the prerogative power of the Crown,² and it was this fact, with its constitutional implications and economic effects, which made monopolies the subject of such violent opposition during the first half of the seventeenth century. To contemporaries, the Stuarts’ grants seemed merely one of their many devices to propitiate favourites and gain money without Parliamentary consent, but, in fact, they were made with varying intentions. Sometimes, a grant was made with the object of protecting a new industry,

such as glass-making, sometimes to prevent the dumping of foreign goods, or, yet again, to protect the small master in his struggle against the big capitalist.³ Nevertheless, there was more than a grain of truth in the prevalent suspicion that industry was being exploited by a selfish ruler for his own profit. Men were made monopolists, not because of their fitness for the task, but because they happened to be *personae gratae* at the court.⁴ Grants of monopoly were bandied about from one favourite to another as though they were some new and attractive form of toy, the glass-making patent passing through half-a-dozen hands before it finally came to Sir Robert Mansell. Sir Walter Raleigh and Sir Thomas Bartlett were among the courtiers who tried their luck in business, and the alum, starch, soap, and wine monopolies were all financed by court favourites.⁵ One of the grounds of attack against the Westminster Soap Company was that it had been managed by gentlemen to the exclusion of traders.⁶ These monopolies, distasteful in themselves, were made doubly obnoxious by being enforced in the Star Chamber. Here again, the Westminster Company came in for special censure, "their persecutions of the Soapmakers of London in the Star Chamber being beyond example in respect of the proceedings and of the sentence itself . . ." ⁷

The Act of 1624 was important rather for its indication of the state of opinion than for what it actually achieved. Several important classes of monopolies were excepted from its provisions, including grants for new inventions, and the increasingly numerous and important grants to corporations. It was not until the Long Parliament met that a wholesale attack was launched against monopolies, and not least against those "which shelter themselves under the name of a corporation".⁸ The Act did not go far to appease public opinion, and in 1639 the Council was forced to revoke a large number of monopolies in a final attempt to ward off the coming storm.⁹

It may be that contemporaries exaggerated the harmfulness and futility of monopolies, as such. Unwin has pointed out that the Stuarts' grants were sometimes actuated by a genuine desire to improve or control a trade, while, from the financial point of view, it is possible to argue that monopolies were an anticipation of the excise, which was imposed soon after they were abolished. Nevertheless, the results did not justify the expedient. In most cases, grants of monopoly were followed by higher prices and poorer quality, while the

inefficiency or speculation of the monopolist usually resulted in the Exchequer's gains being small in proportion to the increased prices paid by the consumer.¹⁰

The storm against monopolies had been brewing for many years, and in 1640 it burst with accumulated vigour. A crop of pamphlets was published, attacking the "divelish Projectors, damned Monopolists," and condemning them to perdition along with the Bishops and judges.¹¹ Another writer saw the patentees in the form of a pack of cards. He enumerated the commodities which had come under their sway, and found that they included coals, soap, starch, leather, wine, hops, tobacco, gold wire, war horns, butter, and rags. Men had blamed the shoemaker and the tanner when boots and shoes were dear, but, all the time, the real offender was the monopolist, whose machinations forced the tradesmen to raise their prices.¹² A favourite simile used in describing the monopolies was that of the Egyptian plagues. Monopolizers, it was said, could be compared to the frogs, for "as those Frogs came unto Pharaoh's Bedchamber, and upon his Bed: So these Diablicall Parasites, did crepp into our King's bosome . . ." Again, like the frogs the monopolists attacked every person in the land, "who is there in all our Kingdom, that have not beene infected by the contagion of their venenous aspersions?"¹³ Another writer described the character and career of a typical monopolist. By birth he is a mongrel, and for his education both peers and lawyers are responsible. At the end of it, he can tickle both the King's ear and the Parliament's purse with stories of his entirely disinterested projects. "All his pretences are pretended to the benefit of the King, the good of the Commonwealth and the employment of 1,000 of poor people; but, Good man, never thinks of any benefit for himselfe." He will never allow that he is a monopolizer, for "of all professions, a Baud, a Pimpe, a Cobler, and a Projector, hate to be called by their proper names, though they love their trade". At the end of a prosperous, if sinful, life, comes an appropriate funeral. "He was buried in Pompe, the Companies of London going before, and the Corporations he had made, and the Countrey and Subjects behinde."¹⁴ Parliament's attack on monopolies was hailed with as much rejoicing as its achievements in the sphere of constitutional reform. At one time, says a pamphleteer, monopolies were firmly entrenched behind a wall of corruption and powerful interests, "yet proves this Building not so strong as was supposed,

when one breath of Parliament can destroy the whole frame thereof, and like a Whirlwind plucke it up by the rootes, but it is no greate wonder to heare of such Blasts, they have been often apparent in this Nation in former times, but by the Wisdome and Policy of Projectors have been prevented for a great Space of yeares . . .”¹⁵

During November, 1640, a series of petitions was presented to the Commons by various merchants who claimed that they had suffered from the monopolists' exactions. The Coopers declared that they were an ancient Company who were accustomed to buy wine and sell it wholesale, but in 1638, just when they had laid in a stock to the value of £40,000, the Vintners, by promising to pay 40s. a tun to the King, obtained from him a proclamation forbidding the Coopers to buy or sell wine.¹⁶ The Grocers and other traders in tobacco spoke of the oppressions suffered by them at the hands of the patentees for granting licences for the sale of tobacco.¹⁷ The London Silkmen reported that Sir W. Middleton and others had procured a patent for marking the parcels of silk,¹⁸ and a similar complaint came from the merchants trading in sheepskins, who were injured by the continuance of the patent for sealing skins.¹⁹ The Leathersellers declared that, as a result of the tax imposed on exported leather under cover of the patent granted to Sir Thomas Glover, great harm had been done to the trade, the sale of hides having decreased so much that many skins were thrown away without due cause.²⁰ Finally, the Wire-drawers protested against the monopoly of the new Company of Pinmakers, and the Feltmakers objected to the Beaver-makers' patent.²¹ From the foregoing petitions, it is obvious that contemporaries used the word "monopoly" to cover a multitude of sins.

Parliament needed little pressure from public opinion to urge it forward in attacking monopolies, which, unpopular enough in themselves, had now become identified with the whole system of government which they were endeavouring to overthrow. Benjamin Rudyard, speaking in 1640, declared that the imposition of monopolies was a direct consequence of the King's alliance with Rome.²² Holles pointed out that they had interfered with individual rights of property,²³ and one of the accusations brought against Strafford was that he had obtained a patent for tobacco which he had striven to enforce by violent means.²⁴ In November, 1640, Sir John Culpepper made his famous speech against

monopolies, in which he declared that, like the frogs of Egypt, they had infested every corner of the land.²⁵

It might have been expected that the Parliament would pass a general and comprehensive Act abolishing all monopolies. Perhaps they were deterred by the ineffectiveness of the Act of 1624, but, in any case, the line of attack which they adopted was the condemnation of specific grants. In the November of 1640, the Commons passed a resolution forbidding any monopolist or participator in a monopoly to sit in the House,²⁶ and a week later a committee was appointed to examine the cases of various offenders.²⁷ During the same month, the House condemned the patents for lighthouses, glasses, engrossing wills, and writing the King's letters, but, at the King's request, they were referred to the Council for further consideration. Patents still under debate included those for the printing of linen cloth, the importation and garbling of tobacco, and the making of farthing tokens.²⁸ The committee to whom patents were referred ordered Sir Nicholas Cripps to bring in his patents for the sole trade to "Guinney and Binney" for the sole importation of red wood, the patent for "coporis stones", and that for making and selling "beads and beaugles".²⁹ The Commons added a clause to the mandate of the Committee for Monopolies empowering them to investigate the cases of all patentees and monopolists, and the position of those who had advised the King concerning them. It was further ordered that those patents and monopolies which had been complained of in the House should forthwith be brought in.³⁰ Mr. Little and Mr. Carpenter were told to send in the warrants by which they had laid impositions on tobacco,³¹ and in December the patents for salt, soap, leather, and wines were referred to the Committee for Monopolies.³² Early in the next year, the Commons referred the whole consideration of all monopolies, except those of salt, soap, and leather, to the committee which was already dealing with those monopolies which concerned the Commons.³³ Later in the year, there is mention of several actions for debt, assault, and false imprisonment being brought against offenders under the Statute of Monopolies.³⁴

Certain monopolies attracted unusual attention, and foremost among these were those of soap and wine. A soap-making patent had been granted in 1622 to two manufacturers who had curried favour with a courtier, but, in 1631, several courtiers took over the patent and called themselves the

Westminster Soap Company. They immediately came into conflict with the existing Company of London Soapmakers, but were able to establish their superiority in an exhibition of washing given before the Lord Mayor. In competing with their rivals, they were supported by the Government, for Charles issued a proclamation forbidding soap to be made except from vegetable fats, well knowing that the London Soap-makers used train oil. In 1634, the Westminster Company received permission to use the processes which had been pronounced illegal in their rivals, but, by 1640, the old soapmakers were able to promise the Crown a larger annual revenue than the Westminster Company, and thereupon they received a new grant of monopoly.³⁵ A pamphlet published in 1641 describes the long battle between the two companies. It tells how Sir H. Compton, Sir H. Guilford, and Sir R. Weston, "being most part of them Popish recusants," secured a patent from the King on false pretences. Having obtained their monopoly, they endeavoured to exploit it, "but finding that notwithstanding their endeavours their white soape would not vent according to their expectations, they laboured to draw the Soape-makers of London to joyne with them, using many perswasions and promises of great profit." When this endeavour failed, they hit on fresh devices for injuring their rivals, and, after vexing the kingdom for several years, surrendered their patent in return for a grant of £40,000 and £3,000 more to cover their expenses. This sum was paid by the London Company, who were also forced to buy up the Westminster Soapers' materials at excessive prices, "and this all onely to have the use of their trade againe, whereof they were deprived in manner and by the meanes aforesaid."³⁶ There seems little doubt that the monopoly of the Westminster Company affected the consumers' interests adversely. In 1640, Antony Errington, a Newcastle citizen, told his burgesses that there was much distress in the North owing to the high price of soap. Before the monopoly, coarse soap was retailed at 2½*d.* a pound, but was now 4*d.*, while fine soap had risen from 3*d.* to 5*d.* or 6*d.* a pound.³⁷

The Long Parliament had no doubt as to the culpability of the Westminster Company. It referred the soap patent to the Committee for Monopolies,³⁸ and in August, 1641, Mr. King made his report. The House resolved that the grant of incorporation to the Westminster soapmakers was a monopoly and illegal in the creation, that the proclamations

made in support of it were contrary to the liberty of the subject, and that the decrees and prosecutions made in the Star Chamber against the London Soapmakers were illegal.³⁹ A Bill was read twice to force the Westminster Company to refund such money as they had unjustly exacted from consumers by their exorbitant prices,⁴⁰ while in 1647 an ordinance for punishing Sir H. Compton and others for monopolizing soap was introduced.⁴¹

It was a common occurrence for the staunchest anti-monopolists to foreswear their principles as soon as they had the chance of becoming monopolists themselves. The London Company may have been a more democratic and efficient body than its rivals, but it was still a monopoly. At first, Parliament seems to have thought that it, too, should be condemned. In 1642, a committee was ordered to prepare a Bill to charge the London Soapboilers,⁴² and two years later a committee was ordered to consider both the old and new projects.⁴³ The independent soapmakers were convinced that the new monopolist was as bad as the old. In a pamphlet published in 1646, R. Wilkins tells how the London Soapmakers pleaded that they had to set up a monopoly in self-defence against the Westminster Company, the truth being that they wanted an opportunity to oust all others from the trade. Their fault was the worse because they were Protestants, while their rivals were ignorant Papists, "and so were principled to ruate the Kingdom . . . a Patent being agreeable to their principles."⁴⁴ The justification which the London Company pleaded was that a large amount of illicit soap was being made by stealth, and the state thus cheated of its excise. To remedy this, they proposed that an additional excise should be put on soap and that the Company should be allowed to collect it. On the other hand, the independent makers urged that, as freemen of London, they had an equally good right to practice the soap-boiling art, and they added that the mere fact of their being able to dispose of their goods showed that these could not be of inferior quality.⁴⁵ It is possible that the London Company's promise to collect the excise influenced the Government in its favour, and its long struggle against the particularly offensive Westminster Company may not have been without effect. In any case, the London Company's monopoly was one of the few which survived the criticism of the Long Parliament. The independent soap-boilers invoked the Statute of Monopolies against them,

but, after being fought for fifteen years, the case ended in a triumph for the London Company.

The occasion of this victory is unusually interesting, for it seems definitely to establish the fact that, while monopolies were regarded with extreme suspicion during the Interregnum, their legal position was unaltered. The point at issue in the trial was whether the London Soap-makers' patent was a legal charter of incorporation, or a monopoly falling under the statute of 1624. In summing up, the judge based his decision mainly on the fact that the patent did not possess the distinguishing and essential characteristics of a monopoly. "I know very well," he said, "that common and vulgar judgments run high against all such patents and condemn them before they understand them, as being contrary to the liberty of the subject and the freedom of trade; but they that consider them better are not so hasty in their censures; for certainly upon serious consideration all such patents and bye-laws as tend most to the well-regulating and ordering of trade . . . have always been allowed by law, but patents which tend to the engrossing of trade . . . have always been held unreasonable and unwarrantable." Thus, such a grant as that made to one man for the sole making of playing cards was illegal, "because injurious to the Publick," but the case at trial was of a different character, for the London Soapmakers were a large corporation to which anyone who had served his apprenticeship might be admitted. The judge then elaborated the point that restriction of trade was, in some cases, both necessary and beneficial, and quoted various examples to prove that such restriction tended to the good of the whole, while proving irksome to private individuals.⁴⁶ Despite this judgment, it appears that the independent soap-makers persisted in their charges, for in June, 1657, a report from the Committee of Trade was made on the petition of the London Soapboilers, and the Commons thereupon ordered that all proceedings at law against the petitioners should be suspended until the following November.⁴⁷

The wine monopoly, though probably not so serious a grievance as that of soap, raised almost as great a storm.⁴⁸ One pamphleteer says that, as in Egypt no thirsty dog can lap the River Nile without being snapped up by a crocodile, so "neither in our Land could any honest man whom drie necessitie by compulsive coercion required to allay his sitiating thirst sip at the odiferous Spring of Bacchus".⁴⁹

The patent for the wine farm had been granted to a considerable number of men, but the farmers protested that, with the exception of Alderman Abell, who was Treasurer, they had never received one penny of the forty shillings a tun which was their right.⁵⁰ In a dialogue between Abell and his confederate Kilvert, the means by which they had secured their monopoly were described. Abell says that the first thing for the would-be patentee to do is to pretend that the merchants and vintners practise some gross abuses which can be remedied only by the grant of a patent. Kilvert suggests that the Parliament may put difficulties in the way, but his companion cries, "Tush, feare not that, we must have some great men to have a feeling in the cause and by that meanes back us."⁵¹ But now, says the pamphleteer, their tune is changed, and, as a just recompense for the large number of men whom they have ruined, they are themselves ruined by Parliament.⁵² In November, 1640, it was reported from the Committee for Grievances that the Vintners had exhibited a petition against Alderman Abell, and thereupon he and two confederates were told to appear before the House as delinquents.⁵³ In December, the Vintners' case was referred to a committee,⁵⁴ and in May, 1641, Mr. Glyn reported on it. The following resolutions were carried: First, that the patent for imposing the duty of forty shillings a tun on wines was illegal in the creation and a grievance; secondly, that the imposition of a penny a quart on French wines was a grievance; thirdly, that the first-named imposition was a grievance in execution; fourthly, that Alderman Abell and Mr. Kilvert were the principal projectors, both in creating and executing the project. It was resolved that a Bill should be prepared describing the offences which Abell and Kilvert had committed, "to the end they may be made exemplary."⁵⁵ In July, Mr. Glyn made a further report on the Vintners' case, stating that the total profit which had accrued to the King in three years had been £9,606. The Commons resolved that the Company of Vintners, by their offer to the King of forty shillings a tun on wines, were contrivers of an unlawful imposition, and therefore delinquents.⁵⁶

Other important patents which were condemned at this time were those for glass, alum, and salt. Since 1615, Mansell had controlled the glass industry, and, despite many complaints, the glass patent was exempted from the Act of 1624. Mansell continued to flourish, for he told the

Council that when the Scots came he had three furnaces, fully manned, 1,200 cases of window glass worth £1,500, ready to be sent south, and he added that he had sunk £4,000 in equipping his works.⁵⁷ In 1642, an order was passed by the Commons telling him to restore certain glass which he had seized, and directing him to attend the House, bringing his patent with him.⁵⁸ The glass patent was submitted to the consideration of the Committee for Grievances,⁵⁹ and in May, 1642, Mansell was ordered to deliver it up to the Clerk of the House.⁶⁰ The alum monopoly met with a like fate. Owing to faulty administration, it had been a failure from the first, and in 1648 the London Dyers presented a petition which stated that it was a grievous and intolerable burden. The Commons thereupon resolved that the alum patent granted to Sir J. Gibson was illegal and void and should be called in.⁶¹ Agitation against the salt monopoly had begun early in the seventeenth century, and in the anti-monopoly debate of 1601 it was asserted that the price of salt had risen to ten times its former figure. Elizabeth annulled the grant, but it was revived by Charles I with conspicuous lack of success. The Long Parliament called in the patent, and, as a consequence of the freedom of trade which followed, prices dropped to half.⁶²

An interesting monopoly which was attacked during the Interregnum was that of the Newcastle Coal Gild. The early history of this body is somewhat obscure, and in various respects it differed from the ordinary gild. Its position was strengthened by a grant of incorporation from Elizabeth, and, by reason of its close connection with the municipality, it was able to exercise an effective control over the coal trade.⁶³ This control was a monopoly, and now a certain Ralph Gardiner took up the cudgels on behalf of free trade. He insisted that the destruction of the prerogative power which had granted monopolistic charters should be followed by the destruction of the charters themselves. "Why do not our just judges send such like from the Charter to the slaughter? If Strafford lost his life for acting oppressively by an Arbitrary Power, why not others for the same?"⁶⁴ In 1653, the Committee for Trade and Corporations considered a petition from Gardiner in which the bad effects of the Corporation's monopoly were set forth. All people not free of the town, says Gardiner, are called "foreigners", and forbidden to take any part in the coal trade. Even if a ship is sinking seven miles away from

Newcastle, nobody on the spot may try to save her, for a Newcastle man must be sent for, "who comes at leisure, besides his demands, which is excessive." It is clear that the Newcastle Coal Corporation was closely identified with the municipal government, and, among its general activities, Gardiner condemns the practice of engrossing corn and keeping up prices until the poor are forced to eat beasts' blood. His indictments were so serious that the Recorder and Aldermen of Newcastle, together with various other burgesses, appeared at Whitehall in December, 1653, and begged for ten weeks in which to assemble their arguments. Their eloquence seems to have been of no avail, for Gardiner prints a copy of an Act declaring free trade in the River Tyne, which he says would have passed if the late Parliament had continued. The Act declared that, since trade and commerce were now more than ever a national interest, the Newcastle Corporation's harmful monopoly of the coal trade must cease. The Admiralty Committee was to appoint fit and able persons from the counties of Northumberland, Durham, the Port of London, and the Corporation of Newcastle to be Conservators of the Tyne, and commissioners were to be empowered to give instructions to the Conservators and to hear complaints against them.⁶⁵

Though the Act which Gardiner quotes never appeared in the list of accomplished legislation, the Government showed that it did not approve of the high prices demanded by the Newcastle Gild. In 1656, representatives of the London City Government appeared before the Council of State, and reported that there were 300 ships waiting at Newcastle to take in coal which had been hindered by some new imposition. They prayed that the ships might be speedily dispatched to deliver their coal at last year's rates, and that the new impositions might be examined. A committee, which had been appointed to consider the grievances of ships trading to Newcastle, reported that the charge for carrying coal had been increased from 7*s.* to 12*s.* a keel, and was now raised to 21*s.* 4*d.*, which would have the effect of increasing the retail price of coal by 4*s.* 8*d.* a cauldron. The Council therefore ordered the Corporation of Newcastle to let all ships load for six months at the same rates as in April, 1655. Representatives of the Corporation and the coal traders were to appear before the Council so that the matter might be investigated.⁶⁶ Nothing more is heard of this inquiry, but after the Restoration the power of the Coal Gild rapidly declined.⁶⁷

It would not be true to say that under the Commonwealth all monopolies came to an end. The case of the London Soap Company has already been described, and there were other monopolies which continued to exist, if not to flourish. The unusual position of the mining industry, in which the Crown claimed ownership of gold and silver mines and had special rights in the tin mines of the Duchy of Cornwall, offered great opportunities to the monopolist. Elizabeth ceded her tin-mining rights to a group of capitalists on whom the miners became entirely dependent, and in 1630 a judge declared that "the mine workers in respect of their poor Estates are eaten out by the hard and usurious contracts for tin".⁶⁸ The tin farmers' patent expired at the beginning of the Long Parliament, and, after the Tinnners had addressed several petitions to Parliament for liberty of trade, the Commons declared that the pre-emption of tin was a grievance and should be removed.⁶⁹ In 1654, the Tinnners seem to have thought that a further reminder of the advantages of free trade was necessary, for they insisted that, "there is no disputing against one's sense and common experience which can evidence, That in the various changes and obstructions of Trade which have been within these last few years, yet the Tinnners have still a far better price than ever they could under a Farm."⁷⁰ On the whole, however, the Interregnum Governments appear to have been quite ready to take over the mining rights and privileges which their predecessors had enjoyed. In 1653, a petition was presented to the Council of State reminding them that the petitioners had already presented a proposal to them for finding and exploiting a coal mine in the New Forest. It was stated that the Council of Trade had authorized the adventurers to make an agreement by which they should dig at their own charge for thirty years, within prescribed limits, and give half their profits to the state.⁷¹ Again, in 1646, the Lords ordered that a certain Goodere was to be settled in quiet possession of the Mines Royal in Cardigan, "in as full and absolute a Manner, to all Intents and Purposes as they were possessed by him . . . before the War began."⁷²

The story of T. Bushell illustrates the privileged position which a mining monopolist possessed. Under Charles I, Bushell accomplished great things by reviving old, drowned mines, and, as a reward, in 1641 the justices were told to protect him from the attacks of malignant persons. During the war he was given command of Lundy Island, and, when

the tide turned against his party, he surrendered so readily that he completely won over the hearts and heads of the Parliamentarians. Fairfax wrote to Lenthall on the subject of Bushell: "he hath been very industrious in finding out of Lead Mines, which are like to produce great quantities of silver." Though, says Fairfax, he has a just claim to the customs of lead in England and Wales, which were granted to him by Charles I, yet he modestly contents himself with asking such reasonable sums as the new Government will grant in return for his exploitation of the mines. Fairfax recommends that all Bushell's demands shall be immediately granted, lest he leave the country without making further discoveries, "for truly, Sir, this last discovery of his in the county of Devon with representations of other proceedings hath almost perswaded him to be an Adventurer, who remains your humble servant, Thomas Fairfax."⁷³ In 1647, the Commons resolved that Bushell should be pardoned and restored to such rights as he had formerly enjoyed in the mines of Devon, Cornwall, and Wales.⁷⁴ At the Restoration, this commercial Vicar of Bray was still prospering and petitioning Charles II for the payment of debts contracted in his predecessor's reign.⁷⁵

Another form of monopoly which received the sanction of the Interregnum Governments was that of patents for new inventions. William Potter reminded the Council that they had granted him a patent for fourteen years for his invention of an engine to raise water, but, since he had introduced several improvements, he wished to have it renewed with these additions.⁷⁶ A London scrivener petitioned for a fourteen years' patent for making white salt out of bays salt, and also for producing saltpetre, and in 1651 a private Act was passed for granting a fourteen-years' patent to Jeremy Buck, of Minchinhampton, for a new invention for melting iron.⁷⁷

Despite these exceptions, it seems fairly clear that, during the Interregnum, English industry took the important step of throwing off the strait waistcoat of monopoly in which continental industry was confined till a much later date. Public opinion at this time was unanimous in condemning monopoly; so much so, indeed, that to call a person or institution monopolistic was often an effective substitute for argument. The Government, too, despite its toleration of certain exceptional types of patent, was clearly opposed to any such industrial policy as had com-

mended itself to Charles I. After the Restoration, monopolies no longer occupied an important place in industrial organization, and the turning-point in their history took place during the Interregnum.

(b) COMMERCIAL MONOPOLIES

The case of the great commercial monopolies was very different from that of their industrial prototypes. While the majority of the latter had come into being to suit the convenience of the King and his needy courtiers, and had been marked by little economic success, the trading companies had originated in a genuine desire to develop new areas, and had usually justified their existence. The Merchant Adventurers and the Staplers had been formed long before the sixteenth century, and were regulated, as opposed to joint stock companies. In the sixteenth century, there was a burst of activity in foreign trade; new and remote countries offered themselves as profitable markets, and, in order to exploit these areas, a large number of companies were formed on the joint stock principle, which was more suitable to the development of trade in distant and possibly hostile regions. Among the more important of these were the Russia Company and the African Company, which were formed in 1553, the Levant Company which dates from about thirty years later, and, finally, the East India Company which was established in 1601. At a time when trading interests were not strong enough to overcome national and religious prejudices, and when diplomatic services were not able to protect the ordinary trader, the companies performed an essential service in coming to terms with foreign rulers and securing adequate protection for their members. In return for this protection, the members had to submit to strict regulations, which fixed the time of sailing, the prices and places at which they sold their goods, and various other matters connected with their trade in foreign countries. The terms of admission to the companies varied, but a moderately high entrance fee and the status of a "mere" merchant were usually indispensable.

Despite its usefulness, the companies' method of organization could be called a monopoly, and in 1604 the movement against industrial monopolies was followed by a similar agitation against commercial monopolies. Two Bills were introduced into the Commons, one "for all merchants to

have free liberty of trade into all countries, as is used in other nations ", and the other " for the enlargement of trade into foreign countries ". These measures were eloquently supported by Sandys in language which forecasts the Declaration of Rights. He said that, " All free subjects are born inheritable as to their land as also to the free exercise of their industry, in those trades whereto they apply themselves and whereby they are to live." Since merchandise was the most important of these means of livelihood, it was contrary to the natural rights and liberty of Englishmen to restrict them from trading. Another Bill was introduced which aimed at empowering anyone to trade in those countries hitherto reserved for the companies, but provided that these bodies were to continue to exist, and that periodic levies were to be made on those who availed themselves of the facilities which they offered. These measures were thrown out by the Lords; ⁷⁸ and, at first sight, their action seems to afford yet another instance of the unenlightened conservatism of the Upper House. But Sandys' high-toned speeches should not be taken too literally. In the seventeenth century, the *soi-disant* free trader was often the would-be monopolist, and men who are found attacking one company often occupied lucrative positions in another. The agitation of 1604 soon died down, and, during the period of good trade which followed, the companies did exceedingly well.⁷⁹ In 1624, when the Monopoly Act was passed, opinion was in favour of the general principle of trading monopolies, though certain points in their organization were criticized.⁸⁰

It was to be expected that, under the Commonwealth, there would be a fresh outburst of agitation against the companies. Monopolies of all sorts were being attacked, and the closely allied industrial monopolies were staggering under their death blow, while a flank attack was delivered by Hobbes, who compared societies within the state to " worms in the entrails of the natural man ". John Lilburne traced an intimate connection between the monopoly of the church and that of the Merchant Adventurers,⁸¹ and said he believed that the clergy and the companies had entered into an unholy compact, " seeing that the temporall and other trade-Monopolizers and other Prerogative men in London are their (the clergy's) stalking horses, by which they act their designs the more strongly, the one helping the other to inslave the people." In the same way, said Lilburne, prerogative government had been bolstered up by the

companies, who were always ready to execute the King's most arbitrary commands and supply him with money. They had overthrown all trading rights except their own, "though they be the common birthright and inheritance of every particular individuall freeman of England; yea, of the meanest Cobler and Tinker as well as of the greatest Gentleman and Noble."⁸² T. Johnson, merchant, published in 1646 an anticipation of Hobbes's famous attack on lesser societies. He pointed out that the whole kingdom was itself a corporation or society of men, bound together by similar interests, "but particulars, Patent societies swelling with a luciferian spirit, did by seruptitious Patents incorporate themselves, and exclusively become destructive of the whole body . . ."⁸³ Another pamphleteer pointed out that the free exercise of individual rights was the best guarantee for the efficient management of trade,⁸⁴ and Lewis Roberts, a merchant himself, agreed that private profit would automatically adjust itself to public ends, and wished to leave all to the "judicious Merchant whose labour is to profit himself, yet in all his actions doth therewith benefit his King, Country and fellow subjects".⁸⁵ Again, it was urged that, from a purely empirical point of view, companies should be abolished. As one writer said, "those immunities which were granted in the infancy of Trade, to incite people to the increase and improvement of it, are not so proper in these times."⁸⁶ G. Gardyner, writing in 1651, declared that he had nothing to say with regard to the abstract rights of the companies to exist, "which sort of people I account a benefit or a losse according as they are established or managed, in which the Companies of England have been defective."⁸⁷ Henry Robinson pointed out that, whereas companies had been formed to further trade as a whole, in practice they had furthered the interests of particular men.⁸⁸ Popular criticism was voiced in a petition from the officers and soldiers of the garrisons at Portsmouth and other towns, who complained that the country in general, and the poor in particular, had suffered great hardships through the decay of trade brought about by the companies' restrictive policy. They asked that all free subjects might enjoy their right to the improvement of their estates and stocks, and that all charters of monopoly might be abolished.⁸⁹

Possibly because the whole question of the woollen trade was evoking serious comment, the Merchant Adventurers' Company came in for the most general and

hostile criticism. Their monopoly was often attacked by pamphleteers and Parliamentary committees whose primary object was to consider means by which the woollen industry might be revived. One writer declared that, under their rule, every branch of the trade was cramped. The clothiers were discouraged, their sales being restricted to a few powerful merchants who were able to treat the "younger and inferior" traders as they pleased. This oppression reacted on the weavers. The merchants and traders were injured because the Adventurers restricted their trade within such narrow limits. The Company took only a few apprentices, whose friends could afford to pay large entrance fees, and these served their time "more like unto gentlemen than according to the ancient, provident discipline of the apprentices of London." Even within the privileged circle of the Adventurers themselves there was oppression, for the "older and greater" traders were allowed larger "stints" and monopolized all the marked cloth, which they sold at a loss rather than let it come into the hands of inferior traders. When the sale of cloth took place abroad, the small merchants were at a disadvantage, for, even if they were allowed to sell at the same rate of profit as the great ones, "they sell so little that it amounts to nothing; whilst the other sells so much, so speedily, hath so much command of moneys at low rates (Chamber Money) that at a low profit per cent in a short time he gets to an Alderman's estate whilst the others are worne to nothing." The effect of this form of organization was to create extremes of riches and poverty, and to hinder the wide distribution of English cloth.⁹⁰

John Lilburne waxed particularly eloquent against the "prerogative-patentee monopolizing Merchant Adventurers", who "have contrary to Right, Law and Justice robbed me of my trade".⁹¹ He pointed out that, since wool was the staple commodity of the kingdom, it was specially necessary for all Englishmen to be allowed to trade in it.⁹² Lilburne contented himself with general vituperation against the Adventurers, but in one of his pamphlets he included a petition from two merchants, W. Sykes and T. Johnson, who dwelt on the practical evils caused by the monopoly of the cloth trade. They said that it brought hardship to shipowners, clothiers, spinsters and thousands of poor people, that it decreased the customs revenue and ruined navigation. The price of our cloth in foreign countries was lowered, and the price of all commodities

imported from abroad was enhanced because the Adventurers were too few in number to drive a brisk trade.⁹³ Another writer agreed that nothing was more harmful to the country than the Adventurers' monopoly, for such patents "like Incubusses doe suck the very vitall spirits, and drive into one veine that masse of blood which should cherish the whole body." It has been objected that, if there were free trade in cloth, a glut would follow and the whole country would suffer, but, in fact, nothing but good would ensue, for "trade is like Dung, which being close kept in a heap or two stinks, but being spread abroad it doth fertilize the earth and make it fructifie." It is better to trade with plentiful stock at a moderate price than with scanty stocks at a high rate, as the Adventurers do. "There are two main things that conduce to make a trade flourish, plenty of Merchandize and a multitude of Merchants." It can be proved, says this writer, that before 1633 when a proclamation for restraint of the cloth trade was passed, there were as many as 600 traders, but in 1639 there were only 180. Because of the bad effects of the Adventurers' monopoly, Holland is usurping our trade, and nothing will induce her to deal with us again but the cheapness and plenty which every Dutchman seeks for. "There is nothing that conduceth more to the enlargement of selling any Commodity than cheapness, for the Dutchman always goeth to the cheapest, though from a Christian to a Jew."⁹⁴

The agitation against the Merchant Adventurers was carried on in Parliament with no less vigour than in the pamphlet literature of the time. In the first place, the protests seem to have been due less to general objections to the Company's control than to dissatisfaction with the bad state of the clothing trade. In 1641, the Lords received a petition from a large number of clothiers complaining that merchants would not purchase their cloth. It was ordered that the Lord Mayor should send for the Adventurers and instruct them to buy up the cloths, "or else their Lordships will take some present Course that it shall be free for other Men to buy and transport the same."⁹⁵ A few months later, the Commons appointed a committee to consider the patents granted to the Adventurers for transporting cloths and manufacturing wool, and to examine all complaints which were made touching the abuses practised by them in these respects.⁹⁶ The same Parliaments which were unanimous in condemning industrial monopolies might have been

expected at least to turn a severely critical eye on those companies which exercised a monopolistic control over trade, yet, at the end of the Interregnum, no steps had been taken to limit their powers, and both the Merchant Adventurers and the East India Company were in a stronger position than before. It has been suggested by Professor Scott that political reasons had a good deal to do with this unexpected development, for the East India Company had suffered from Charles I's displeasure and the Merchant Adventurers had had their charter seized by James. But, so far as the Adventurers are concerned, the clue to the mystery seems to be financial rather than political. It is monotonous to refer continually to the financial necessities of the Interregnum Governments, but the importance of this factor in the general history of the time has often been neglected. The Government looked to the City and its Companies as the chief source of support, and it would have required a Parliament of Saints indeed to kill the goose which laid the golden eggs. In May, 1641, the Commons ordered a committee to meet in the Treasury Chamber to consider what money was due to the Scots' and English armies. They were to send for the Merchant Adventurers and the Merchant Strangers and to treat with them for a loan, "and to consider what the damages will be of those conditions, that they will undertake to lend monies upon . . ." ⁹⁷ Mr. Treasurer reported from the committee that £773,900 was the total debt which had to be paid, and he offered a proposition from the Merchant Adventurers which was debated and finally accepted. ⁹⁸ There then occurs a reference to £150,000 which the Adventurers had promised to lend, ⁹⁹ and a few days later the Commons ordered that the Company should attend a committee for raising money. ¹⁰⁰ In these circumstances, it is surprising that the Commons should have gone so far as to order Sir R. Harley to bring in the petition against the Adventurers which had been presented to the Committee for Trade. ¹⁰¹ Throughout 1642, the same bargaining went on between the Government and the Adventurers. In January of that year, the Commons referred gratefully to the Adventurers' loan of £30,000 and to their willingness to advance the further sum of £20,000, ¹⁰² and in May a committee was ordered to meet them, and to press for a speedy answer "concerning the lending of Monies". ¹⁰³

By 1643, the Government's necessities had created the Adventurers' opportunity. *Mercurius Aulicus* reported

that the Government, "finding that their Farmers of the Customes were utterly unable to supply their continually wants . . . had been practising with the Turkey Merchants and Merchant Adventurers to advance summes of money for their present use, but could speed with neither."¹⁰⁴ In September, 1643, the same paper commented on a transaction the substance of which is reported in the Commons' Journals.¹⁰⁵ The Commons had voted for the immediate raising of £60,000 to pacify the seamen, "and the Merchant Adventurers were treated with to lay downe the money. To which when as they would no otherwise agree then on having of an Ordinance at the present for the enlargement of their priviledges against law and reason (and that to be confirmed by Act of Parliament whensoever His Majesty should be reduced to such extremities as not to dare to deny anything) . . . the business did receive a stop."¹⁰⁶ Before a month had passed, the Commons had made up their minds that "law and reason" must bend before necessity. When a messenger from the Upper House reported that, though the Lords agreed to the Adventurers' loan of £30,000, they would prefer to send their opinion on the Company's proposed incorporation by their own messenger, the Commons directed that their Lordships should be reminded of the need for haste, and of the fact that the £30,000 would not materialize till Parliament had performed its share of the bargain.¹⁰⁷ On 12th October, 1643, an ordinance was passed for "the better encouragement and supportation of the Fellowship of Merchant Adventurers of England, which hath been found very serviceable and profitable unto this State". All the former privileges of the Corporation were confirmed and the fine for admission was doubled.¹⁰⁸

This confirmation and strengthening of the Adventurers' powers was not accepted without question. In 1644, the Mayor and Aldermen of Colchester, together with many inhabitants of Suffolk and the Essex clothiers, petitioned the Commons that they might have the same freedom to trade in the new drapery as they had enjoyed before the ordinance of 1643.¹⁰⁹ A month later, on Mr. Grimston's report from the committee which had been considering the petitions concerning the new drapery, the question was propounded that others besides the Merchant Adventurers should be allowed to trade freely in bays, says, stuffs and stockings in Germany and the Low Countries. The proposal was negatived, and the business of the new draperies was

referred back to the committee.¹¹⁰ In 1647, the Lords received a petition from "many thousands", who complained that "although all new illegal Patents are by you abolished; yet the oppressive Monopoly of Merchant Adventurers and others do still remain", a menace to popular liberty and a serious prejudice to trade and navigation.¹¹¹

The alliance between the Adventurers and the Government was a *mariage de convenance* rather than one of mutual esteem. Among the duties laid on the commissioners appointed by the Act of 1650 for Advancing Trade, was the consideration of whether it was advisable to adopt a more open and free method of trading than that of the Companies, and, if so, in what manner this should be accomplished.¹¹² In 1656, when a suggestion was made to settle the Adventurers' staple at Dordrecht, the whole question of their right and fitness to monopolize the clothing trade was raised once again, and they told the Protector that never before had they been in such danger. A certain Mr. Kiffen offered reasons to the Council why the trade in woollen manufactures should be free. The present system "taketh away ye native liberty of every man to bee alike free to transport that, as any other Comodity, into what port beyond ye Seas seemeth most advantagious to him." The Adventurers' monopoly restricts the clothing market, the younger clothiers, especially, being hardly treated, and the oppression which they suffer reacts on the weavers, dyers and all whom they employ.¹¹³

From another side, the Merchant Adventurers were attacked by the Clothworkers, who complained that they exported white, undressed cloth, contrary to a statute of 1556.¹¹⁴ In December, 1656, the Committee for Trade heard the arguments of both parties, Mr. Rich acting as counsel for the Clothworkers and Sir Christopher Packe for the Adventurers. Burton says in his diary that, for his part, he is firmly convinced that the Clothworkers' trade has suffered grave injuries, but the merchants, "by their influence and power at court, have always mastered them."¹¹⁵ On 23rd December, Burton records that he was at the Committee for Trade, "arguing the great case upon the petition of the Clothworkers." The Adventurers won their case, but Burton considered that a chance yet remained that they would be overthrown when the business of free trade was heard the following week.¹¹⁶

At the beginning of January, 1657, the Merchant Adventurers had once more to fight for their lives against the

free traders. The Committee for Trade debated the petition of the free merchants, wherein it was set forth that it was injurious for the country's staple trade to be monopolized by one company. The free traders brought forward strong arguments, but the Merchant Adventurers had on their side Sir Christopher Packe, the Master of their Company and probably one of the most powerful commercial magnates of his day. Burton records how he "turned in the debate like a horse and answered every man. I believe he spoke at least thirty times. Mr. Lloyd helped him as much as could be, but both reason and equity and the sense of the Committee being against them, they were forced at last to give up the cudgels but with much ado. Sir Christopher Packe did cleave like a clegg, and was very angry he could not be heard *ad infinitum*, though the Committee were forced at last to come to a compact with him, that he should speak no more after that time." These two speakers and others, to the total number of thirty-three, were on the Adventurers' side. All the rest of the committee, including Sir John Hobart, Captain Kiffen and Mr. Robinson, were on the side of free trade. At last, says Burton, the committee resolved that it was for the good of the Commonwealth for all native merchants to be allowed to trade in woollen manufactures to Germany and the Netherlands.¹¹⁷ A week later, the same committee sat again, and, at this meeting, Sir Christopher Packe and his allies attempted to retrieve their defeat by contending that the committee had no power to present a Bill for free trade to the House. Nevertheless, "with much ado, it was resolved that a Committee be appointed to bring in a Bill for a free trade."¹¹⁸ Whether this project to overthrow the Adventurers was stifled by renewed efforts on the part of Sir Christopher and his satellites, or whether it was pushed out of sight by the exigencies of the political and financial situation is not certain, but nothing further is heard of the Free Trade Bill which the committee was to prepare.

In the case of the Merchant Adventurers' Company, the free trade agitation under the Commonwealth was of a different character from that which had produced the Bills of 1604. The earlier movement was largely the work of men who objected to those commercial monopolies in which they had no share, but had no genuine conviction of the advantages of free trade. Under the Commonwealth, both the theoretical and practical objections to companies were part of a general

movement against monopoly, too widespread to be artificial, and the Adventurers were attacked by men of all classes and interests who believed that free trade in woollen goods was both justifiable and expedient. It is clear that Parliament was by no means wholly on the Company's side, and it is probable that, without the pressure of financial necessity, their privileges would have been abolished, or at least curtailed.

Other companies suffered from attacks by so-called free-traders, who were composed mainly of those engaged in carrying on the same traffic. The East India Company considered that their privileges had been infringed by the formation of a society of merchants known as Courten's Association, which had received permission from Charles I to trade to the East Indies. By propitiating the Interregnum Governments, the older Company hoped to be able to oust the new association. In 1648, they published an advertisement stating that, whereas ordinary subscribers must fill up the list for the new voyage within a given period, members of the Commons would be allowed to come in after the time limit had expired. The House thanked the Company for this fitting token of respect.¹¹⁹ But it was hardly to be expected that the East India merchants intended to lavish useless compliments, and in 1649 they petitioned the Council of State for a renewal of the Company's privileges, pointing out that difficulties had arisen through the action of Courten's Association. The Council recommended a conference between the two bodies, and, at this parley, Courten's merchants proposed a union with the East India Company, who thereupon petitioned Parliament to pass an Act for regulating their trade. In January, 1650, the Commons resolved that the East India trade should be carried on by one company and in one joint stock,¹²⁰ and from henceforth Courten's merchants ceased to have a separate legal existence. Despite their absorption, their protests were not completely silenced, and a pamphlet published in 1652 attempted to prove that the East India Company was a "destructive monopoly", which had led to the exportation of bullion, and the general mismanagement of trade. They had lost the Spice Islands by their neglect and shortsightedness, and this loss had so much injured the coasting trade that other merchants were discouraged from trading to India. Meanwhile, the inner ring of the Company, who alone had succeeded in reaping any benefit from its organization, intrigued for yet more

privileges, with "an unlimited arbitrary power over all Adventurers, and an absolute restraint of the whole Nation . . ." ¹²¹

In 1654, fresh opposition arose from a body of adventurers who wished to trade with the Indies by means of a regulated company. They petitioned the Council of State that the trade to India might be carried on by a company, but with liberty for the members to employ their stocks, servants and shipping at their own discretion. Immediately, the established Company brought forward the usual arguments as to the impossibility of carrying on a remote trade in this way, and the two statements were submitted to the Council of State.¹²² Two years later, the rival claims being still unsettled, the adventurers again stated their case. They declared that a free, regulated trade would encourage industry and enterprise, "which hath latitude and scope to express itself, whilst each person hath the ordering of his owne affaires, whereas on a joint stock it is impossible for one to improve either, only to stand idle, without opportunity to make use of his own talent." In a joint stock company, the trade is understood by only a few people, who, since they have other employments and do not act for themselves alone, "want the care and circumspection which their peculiar and single interest would excite them to . . ." A large number of traders leads inevitably to a large volume of trade, and this, in its turn, means cheaper commodities. Moreover, a free, regulated trade makes it possible for men to adventure their estates at their own time and convenience, without the limitations imposed by a joint stock organization. The eloquence of the adventurers had no effect on the Council, for in February, 1657, they declared that the trade of the East Indies ought to be under the exclusive control of a joint stock organization. The Protector signified his approval, and a committee of the Council was appointed to draw up a charter for the East India Company.¹²³

The Greenland fishing trade was the occasion of a long dispute between the established Company of Muscovy Merchant Adventurers and various independent associations who claimed the right to fish for whales in the Greenland bays. It was only on the surface that this was a dispute between individual free traders and a close corporation, for the independent merchants often formed associations which lacked the power, rather than the intention, to monopolize the trade.¹²⁴ In 1652, the Company complained that their

privileges were threatened by adventurers who based their claims to intrude on the "common right of Englishmen". This complaint was referred to a committee, who recommended that it should be settled by Parliament, and that, in the meantime, the parties were to manage their fishing in such a way as not to disturb each other.¹²⁵ Parliament suggested that a compromise might be reached by giving the regulation of the Greenland trade to a committee chosen from among the different owners of whalers, the 3,000 tons of shipping being divided between the Company and the free adventurers.¹²⁶

These suggestions do not seem to have had the effect of subduing the controversy. During 1654, both sides assembled their arguments and put them before the Council. While the Company fell back on the familiar plea of confusion following in the wake of free trade, the free adventurers based their arguments partly on abstract right and partly on practical necessity. Richard Eccleston, pleading on behalf of the Hull merchants, declared that all men living under the same Government and undertaking the same common responsibilities and charges, ought to enjoy equal liberties. The adventurers asked Parliament to consider whether it was consistent with the good of the Commonwealth to deprive most of its members of the right of participating in an important industry, such as fishing. It was suggested that the Company's control should be abolished, and its place taken by rules and regulations made in Parliament for the conduct of the fishing trade. Thus, all Englishmen would be under a common jurisdiction both at home and abroad, and Parliament would set up courts for the trial of offenders under the mercantile laws.¹²⁷ On their side, the Company were anxious to obtain a more definite control of certain areas, and in 1657 they petitioned for a monopoly in Horn and Bell Sound.¹²⁸ The Protector granted this request in a proclamation which stated that, from henceforth, the Company would issue licences to any Englishman to fish in the Greenland seas outside the area of the two Sounds.¹²⁹

The controversy which went on between the Levant Company and the free traders called forth an unusually well-reasoned and eloquent statement of opinion on both sides. In 1652, Walwyn, suspected of being the most "advanced" of the Levellers,¹³⁰ took up cudgels on behalf of the principle of free trade. He points out that both those

who defend the Company's rule and those who attack it claim that they are aiming at the public good. If one attempts to define this aim, one finds that it is synonymous with common right, a term applied to those privileges which experience has proved to be most essential to the welfare of the community. Among such rights, is undoubtedly "the antient and continuall Claime of Right unto a generall freedome of Trade", a claim put forward from time to time by Parliament and individuals, both before and after the attacks launched by prerogative power. When, as sometimes happens, the Company try to defend themselves by saying that their privileges have been purchased at considerable expense, they are adding to the sum of the charges against them, "it being a Purchase from prerogative and against common Rights and common good."

Turning to more practical arguments against the Company's trade, Walwyn accuses them of putting it in a strait waistcoat, of rigidly controlling times of sailing and places of call, and "trading in a stately manner upon set Dayes". Under a free trade there will be more merchants and greater opportunities. Free competition will give rise to wholesome "strife and emulation", which will result in the production of better and cheaper goods, and the employment of more workmen at higher wages, "worke [at present] being generally scarce through the scarcity of Merchants." An important effect of the opening up of trade will be to encourage sailors to become merchants on a small scale, and "even servants would adventure their wages with them and they would in a short time become able and profitable members of the Commonwealth". Walwyn admits that, to begin with, free trade may not produce so many wealthy men as have been produced by the Companies, "most of them being borne Rich and adding wealth to wealth by trading in a beaten Rode to wealth, wherein noe other had liberty to set his foote". Under a free trade, however, thousands of men will flourish in a state of moderate well-being. Finally, Walwyn disposes of the argument that Companies have justified their existence by their discovery of new trades. It is the common fate of first discoverers to sink into obscurity, while "Companyes grow up after the Trade hath Ripened and is worth the gathering".

But even if all these arguments are admitted, says Walwyn, the Company has the great advantage of possession on its side, an advantage which is felt by the upholders of free

trade to be peculiarly unfair, since "the one hath its foundation in Common Right, the other in prerogative, the Common Enemy". Probably the most just course to pursue, seeing that prerogative is "a kind of Forcible entry", would be to put the people in possession of their native rights once again, and leave the Company to defend its privileges if it could. Alternatively, Parliament might make the experiment of opening the trade for half the number of years which it has been under the Company's domination, and then, "God preserving the Nation from the banefull interposition of prerogative and its moneytaking faculty, "the results would speak for themselves.¹³¹

The Company did not delay in putting before the Committee for Trade a contradiction of Walwyn's accusations and a justification of their own position. They declare that it is even more necessary to maintain the principle of expert knowledge and management in foreign trade than in home industry. "For whereas in all home negotiations," they say, "the loss of one is the gaine of the other, wherein little detriment accrues to ye publique," it is different in the case of foreign trade, where individual loss means so much gain to the foreigner. Then, too, the whole method of Company government is educative, for an inexperienced and untravelled merchant can learn much by listening to discussion in the Court. The Company were probably stating their strongest justification when they described their exercise of those diplomatic functions which were taken over at a later date by the political Government. "The distance of all the Grand Signor's territories is such," they say, "that the State never had (but for occasions of Trade) any ordinary Minister residing there to protect the people, nor any usuall opportunity either to requite curtosies or repaire injuries, Nor any other reason of State, but only reason of Trade." The absence of any strong association among the French merchants trading to Turkey has "totally bereaved" them of their trade, and, indeed, the English have been enabled by their superior organization to outstrip all their rivals. But while the Company protects its members, it does not restrict them unduly. It consists of some hundreds of members, "every one of whom manageth his particular stock in as distinct an interest and way as if we were noe Company at all."

Passing on to a criticism of Walwyn's accusations, the Company begin by objecting to his vague use of the term "common right". If it is used in its "native originall sense",

then, as this right preceded all governments, so its exercise would involve their destruction, not only in trade but in every other sphere. Again, "if by Common right be meant that Right wch enables every man to doe with his owne what himselfe pleaseth," then this right always has been and should be limited for the good of the whole. The particular charges brought by Walwyn against the Company's method of managing its trade are all denied, and the document ends up with a warning against listening to claims made "in the specious name of Liberty and Free Trade". If such claims are to be believed, rather than the evidence of charters and records, then "all men's proprieties may be questioned, for wch we know noe better evidence than Records".¹³² On this note the controversy seems to have ended, and an order from the Navy Committee instructing all merchants to pay their impositions to the Levant Company indicates that the Government had decided to preserve its privileges.¹³³

(II) THE REGULATION AND EXPANSION OF INDUSTRY

The attitude of the Interregnum pamphleteers and Governments towards the problems of industry is unusually interesting. With the fall of the personal government of Charles I, many traditional methods of dealing with industrial problems were set aside or substantially modified, and both rulers and subjects had to face the trade depressions of the Interregnum unaided by familiar weapons.

Despite the development in some departments of the theory and practice of economic individualism, there was no attempt at this time to abolish Governmental control of trade. Individual self interest was vindicated against the limitations imposed by the old conceptions of morality,¹³⁴ and, as has been seen, there was a widespread attempt to overthrow all forms of monopoly, but even the most progressive writers did not suggest that the Government should abandon its duties of supervision and regulation. The sphere and nature of these duties was, however, altered considerably by the influence of new ideals and interests, and, while the early Stuart Governments had framed their policy with some idea of ensuring a certain measure of prosperity for all classes of the community, subsequent efforts were directed mainly towards securing the maximum volume of production.

There seems, indeed, to have been a widespread feeling

that the control of the state over industry and trade should be widened and strengthened. Sir Thomas Roe, writing in 1640, emphasized the necessity for a national policy, and suggested that this might be attained by sending to all the companies, and asking them to state their grievances and suggest remedies. A disinterested body was to be appointed to sift their evidence, which might be given "perhaps not without private or partial ends".¹³⁵ Other writers anticipated the Restoration Council of Trade by advocating some sort of unified, permanent control. It was suggested that there should be established a national Council for governing trade in the same way as there was a Council of War. This body would have the duty of regulating and expanding trade, "that all Importacons and Exportacons may be Caried in such an Orderly way that it may bee to the good, and advancement of the Nation in generall and not, as many are, to the detriment thereof."¹³⁶ Another writer suggested that a committee of merchants should be formed to debate the vexed questions of foreign trade, and settle them to the best advantage. He advised that all those chosen for this committee should be men bred up in foreign parts, who had travelled widely, and that they should be augmented by representatives of every nation with which we carried on a regular trade.¹³⁷ S. Lamb, a London merchant, urged the Protector to erect a Court Merchant, which should be the supreme tribunal in all cases of dispute arising among traders.¹³⁸ Thomas Violet, after describing the mishaps which had befallen English trade during the decade 1640-50, advocated various remedies, which included an increase of state encouragement and control. It behoved the English Government, he said, to follow "the practice of the lords of the United Provinces, who are so vigilant over their traffic that, upon the least complaint of obstruction, they use all means, either by treaty or by force, to remove it."¹³⁹

(a) THE CLOTHING TRADE

In view of these expressions of contemporary opinion, it is not surprising to find that the Interregnum Governments made repeated attempts to deal with the problem of regulation. This was especially the case with regard to the clothing industry, which had suffered extreme hardships as a result of the war, and which had always come in for an unusual amount of Governmental control.¹⁴⁰ Already in

March, 1641, the Commons referred a petition of "divers poor people" to a Committee for Clothing.¹⁴¹ A year later, the Lords resolved that all possible care should be taken to ensure that the commodities of the kingdom should have quick vent, and that clothing and other manufactures should be improved.¹⁴² Again, in 1647, the Lords and Commons ordered the Committee for Foreign Affairs to consider the state of the clothing trade, and the reasons for the falling off in the sale of English manufactures abroad. The committee was also to take into account the traffic in Irish and foreign wool, and to consider how this could be made subservient to English interests.¹⁴³

Various explanations were offered as to the bad state of the clothing industry, the most usual being that the whole trade was suffering from defective regulation, aggravated by the wars. A broadside published in 1647, which claims to be a petition from many thousand clothiers, describes the way in which the various laws made for the prevention of abuses have been evaded or neglected. Latterly, wool-sellers have become more and more deceitful, selling such "deceivable Wooll and trashe" as used to be unknown. Farmers' sons, and others who have already a means of livelihood, have obtained a superficial knowledge of the industry, which has betrayed them into selling badly made goods, calculated to bring English workmanship into discredit in foreign parts. The petitioners suggest that a penalty shall be imposed on each score of faulty fell-wool, and that the penalty for defective fleeces shall be increased. Another cause of trouble, say the petitioners, is that there are not enough officials to inquire into fraudulent practices. They ask that an adequate number may be appointed and promise to bear part of the cost themselves.¹⁴⁴ Sometimes the clothiers disliked the lack of regulation, but at other times it appears to have suited their purpose. A pamphleteer, writing in 1656, describes the way in which the clothiers do all in their power to encourage confusion and slackness. He declares that, outside corporate towns, it is unusual for a searcher to be appointed, and, even if the justice insists on appointing one, "he shall assuredly be affronted, sued and imprisoned by such secret helps as the Clothier can procure in the Exchequer, carrying therewith such abusive countenance of the Law, as a single and simple Officer dares not resist." In corporate towns the position is not much better, for here the searcher has not an adequate number of assistants, and

both he and they are appointed by a magistrate, who is usually a clothier. Naturally, the searcher is under the magistrate's power, and therefore "dares not controule, much lesse correct or seize his Clothes". In the villages, the same evasion of justice occurs, for here, if there is a searcher at all, his seizures come before the quarter sessions, "where by favour and friendship the offender escapes and the State is the sufferer."¹⁴⁵ The *Moderate Intelligencer* declared that the City government of London would do well to petition that the clothiers should be forced to make their goods according to law. At present, they put six quarters instead of seven in the piece, and dressed the cloth so badly that it was only one-third as long as that made in the Low Countries. "When will the time come that care be taken that things be done according to Law?" asks the newspaper. "Never was the Kingdom so full of Antinomians as at this day."¹⁴⁶

The investigations conducted by Parliament bear out the opinion of pamphleteers that the clothing trade stood in need of stricter regulation. Sir Henry Vane reported from the committee appointed to consider the falling-off in the sale of Suffolk cloth that the chief trouble was that, out of fourteen or fifteen thousand cloths, nine or ten thousand were falsely made.¹⁴⁷ Opinion abroad coincided with opinion at home. In 1652, Colonel Mosley reported to the House from the Council of State that the Hamburg Senate had renewed its complaints of English cloth, and it was thereupon resolved that the House should reserve a day on which to debate the question of the defects and abuses in the clothing trade. It was further resolved to instruct the committee who were considering defects in the laws to make an abstract of all laws in force concerning clothing.¹⁴⁸ A member of the Merchant Adventurers' Company at Hamburg declared that our woollen trade had decayed because it was organized on "straggling and loose" lines, cloth being sold haphazard in any and every town by grocers and other merchants, who did not care what its quality was so long as they got rid of it. Thus, foreign countries preferred to make their own cloth, for "by long continuance in the clothing trade they make them very good and substantial, whereas ours are made thin and faulty."¹⁴⁹

In 1656 Richard Bradshaw, the English Resident at Hamburg, presented the Council of State with his opinion on the causes of the decay of the clothing trade in Germany and the Low Countries. In the first place, large quantities

of badly made cloth were exported, and especially was this the case with the new draperies, for which there was no standard of length, breadth or quality. To make matters worse, the Dutch had tried to make their cloth after the English pattern, and had put English arms on the covers of imperfect cloth, which they then transported to other countries. Bradshaw remarks that the extent to which our trade with Germany has diminished will be obvious when we realize that, when the Merchant Adventurers first came to Hamburg, they sold from 80,000 to 100,000 cloths, and now their total never exceeds 20,000.¹⁵⁰ On another occasion, the Council received a series of unsigned observations on the decay of the clothing trade in Germany and the Netherlands. This document stated that a large percentage of wool was exported unwrought to Holland and other countries, and that many clothworkers and weavers emigrated, to the great advantage of the Dutch. The demand for English goods was further decreased by their being sent over to Holland in bad condition, the new draperies, in particular, not being under any sort of regulation, every one being left at liberty to make them as they pleased.¹⁵¹

In 1651, the Council of Trade reported that the decay of trade was due to lack of regulation. It was stated that, in one Spanish port, we used to sell 12,000 pieces of says and serge, but now the number had dropped to 2,000; and the same was true of other ports since the Dutch had learnt to make similar goods of better quality.¹⁵² Sometimes the Council received pleas for improved regulation from the clothiers themselves. For instance, the Essex clothiers in the new drapery asked that they might be established as a trade and empowered to enforce apprenticeship rules,¹⁵³ and the Coggeshall clothiers asked to be allowed to elect officers among themselves for regulating the manufactures of the town.¹⁵⁴

In Yorkshire, the problem of regulation was unusually acute. The power of the Leeds Corporation was limited by the borough boundaries, and, outside their confines, the clothiers did much as they pleased.¹⁵⁵ Even within the towns, regulations were slacker than elsewhere. In 1640, the clothiers of Leeds, Halifax and other clothing towns informed the Council that, whereas by the Act of 1563 no clothier was to take an apprentice whose father did not possess forty shillings freehold, and for every three apprentices must possess one journeyman, these provisions were never observed in the

county of York, "and cannot be for many reasons".¹⁵⁶ But, though the Yorkshire clothiers might chafe against certain aspects of control, they did not wish to see a wholly unregulated trade, and in 1647 the Leeds Corporation approached the justices and complained of the decay of clothing due to inferior wares. The justices promised to assist the Leeds clothiers in a campaign against this abuse, but apparently they did not carry out their intentions.¹⁵⁷ Sometimes trouble arose through the use of a false seal. R. Battye was indicted for using one of these, and the justices declared that: "abuses in this case are not only common but tende to the greate disparagement of good clothmakers, for that by that meanes many badd and false clothes are searched for good clothes, whereby the cloth made in theise parts is much discredited . . . to the greate prejudice of this country and the creditt of our cloths here made." They ordered that R. Battye should be prosecuted, and went on to lay down further precautions against the use of false seals.¹⁵⁸

In 1654, the Leeds broad clothiers made another attempt to increase their powers. They sent a letter to Baynes, their Member of Parliament, proposing that they should have power to act outside as well as inside the borough. Baynes secured the appointment of a commission to consider whether "a select number of discreet and able persons, consisting of Gentlemen, merchants and clothiers, be invested with all the power that the Justices of the Peace had by former statutes," with such additional powers as enquiry should find to be necessary. A similar proposal was made to the justices in 1655 by the Leeds clothiers.¹⁵⁹

Parliament had evidently been considering the case of the Yorkshire industry, for in December, 1656, a Bill for "well ordering and governing the Makers and Workers of broad mixed Woollen Cloth within the West Riding of the County of Yorke, and for making them a Body Politick and Corporate", was ordered to be read a second time.¹⁶⁰ In the debate on the Bill, Mr. Robinson objected that it would be very prejudicial to the City of York and other towns in the Riding, and also to the adjoining wool-growing counties. "This is a mere monopoly," he said, "which will not only destroy the wool grower, but the poor clothier; for it seems that none shall buy or sell any wool but such as are free of this corporation. It will make less manufacture. Sir H. Vane brought in a Bill to this purpose, in the Long Parliament, for Kent, but could not get it to pass. One law through the

whole nation may serve for the regulation of one manufacture." Mr. Ashe opposed Mr. Robinson with the usual argument that better regulation was needed to save our trade from being seized by the Hollanders.¹⁶¹ Nevertheless, on 26th January, 1658, the Bill was rejected, the Commons ordering that the Committee for Trade should consider all Acts touching the drapery of the nation and offer what proposals they thought fit concerning the regulation of the cloth manufacture.¹⁶²

This decision to refuse an extension of powers to the Leeds Corporation was probably well-advised. The petition which had been sent to Baynes was drafted by a few wealthy clothiers, and the result of the proposed association would probably have been to increase their own powers rather than those of the whole body of the trade. The inhabitants of Leeds had already petitioned against the oligarchic constitution of the Leeds Corporation. They related how, before the outbreak of war, it had been decided that the old charter should be surrendered, but, when the troubles began, government according to its terms was revived, "and there has been much oppression and illegality, unjust by-laws, oppressing the clothiers, and unlawful taxes, imprisoning and taking of goods."¹⁶³

The Government made other attempts to improve the regulation of the clothing trade. In 1640, two Bills were read, one for preventing abuses in winding wool and the undue engrossing of wool, and the other for regulating the new drapery.¹⁶⁴ In 1656, a Bill for regulating the making of perpetuanas and serges in Exon and Devon was read a first time,¹⁶⁵ but the Act for regulating the Norwich draperies was the only measure which finally passed into law. In the preamble to this Act, Parliament declared that: "divers Abuses and Deceits have of late years been had and used in the making of Worsted and other Stuffs, commonly called Norwich Stuffs, and in the Reeling of the Yarns whereof the said Stuffs are either wholly or in part made; All which tends to the debasing of the said Manufacture, unto the prejudice of the Publique." It was therefore enacted that a corporation should be established in the city and county of Norfolk for the better regulation of the manufacture. Detailed instructions were laid down for the making and reeling of worsted yarns, and the corporation were ordered to seize any false or defective yarn and impose a fine on the offender. All sorts of stuffs, "whether woven of Wool onely,

or of Wool and other Materials within the City and County of Norwich and County of Norfolk, "were to be under the control of the corporation, the sole exception being certain materials which were already controlled by the Fellowship of "Russet Sattins, Sattins Reverses and Fustian". The stuffs were to be examined and sealed by the Wardens of the Corporation, and penalties were imposed for buying stuffs unsealed.¹⁶⁶ This Act, which was passed in 1650, was re-enacted with a few alterations and additions in 1653,¹⁶⁷ and confirmed in 1657.¹⁶⁸

Other expedients which were suggested for the revival of the clothing trade were the more effective prevention of the exportation of wool, and the lessening of customs duties. Long before 1640, it had become definitely established that wool must not be exported, but, under cover of the general confusion caused by the wars, it is probable that a good deal of illicit transport went on. A broadside of 1647 stated that "there hath been for divers years last past, more especially of late yeares, great quantities both of Wooll and Fullers earth transported into Forraigne parts". Unless some speedy course were taken, our clothing trade would be completely captured by foreign countries.¹⁶⁹ The Essex clothiers asked that the export of wool, "now secretly practised," might be made felony,¹⁷⁰ and one of the accusations brought against the Staplers by the Committee for Trade was that they transported English wool.¹⁷¹ In 1643, it was referred to a committee to write to the Earl of Manchester and tell him to prevent wool from being exported out of Lincolnshire,¹⁷² and a few months later it was ordered that no wool should be exported under any pretext without permission from the Commons.¹⁷³ In 1648, an ordinance was passed prohibiting the export of all wool, woollen yarn, wool-fells, fullers-earth or any clay which could be used in the art of fulling.¹⁷⁴

According to Sir J. Culpepper, the chief reason for the decay of the clothing trade was excessive taxation. "It is the great customs and impositions laid upon our cloath and new Draperies," he said, "I shall give my voice to lay more charge upon the superfluities, due regard being had to trade, which we import from all other Nations; sure I am that those impositions upon our native commodities are dangerous, give liberty to our neighbours to undersell."¹⁷⁵ The imposition of an excise seems to have been more than the industry could bear, and, at the beginning of 1653, the Excise Com-

missioners reported that, in order to relieve it of this burden, the tax on saltery wares should be doubled, and Spanish cottons and imported wools charged 1*d.* in the lb.¹⁷⁶ By an ordinance passed in 1654, woollen goods were expressly exempted from the excise.¹⁷⁷

It is doubtful if the various expedients adopted for the revival of the clothing trade had any considerable effect. Statesmen and merchants were running their heads against a brick wall in attempting to overthrow by fair means or foul any European clothing industry which threatened to compete with that of England. The day when we could hope to maintain a monopoly of the industry was past, and a policy which ignored this hard fact was foredoomed to failure. Nevertheless, the Civil Wars inflicted a serious injury on the clothing trade, both by dislocating the whole machinery of production and distribution and by weakening traditional regulations. It is possible that these evils might have yielded, in some measure, to the treatment prescribed by the Interregnum Governments, but before any great improvement could take place, the clothing trade sustained another blow by the outbreak of the Spanish war, and in 1659 petitioners from Yorkshire spoke of the "particular Decay and Ruine of the Cloathing Trade of this County," due to the effects of the wars with Spain.¹⁷⁸

The difficulties of the clothing trade during these years were many. Besides the troubles due to depressed trade and faulty organization, there was a long and violent wrangle between the Staplers, who acted as middlemen, and the larger Clothiers. The organization of the Staplers had developed at a time when England exported the bulk of her wool, and when it was possible to attempt to divert this trade into a single channel. Cunningham points out that, with the loss of Calais under Mary, the main support of the Staplers' organization was destroyed, while the shrinkage in the export of raw wool deprived them, to a large extent, of their *raison d'être*.¹⁷⁹ They therefore turned their attention towards the internal trade in wool, and here they naturally came into conflict with the Clothiers, who declared that they were no better than "broggers and jobbers". In a petition of 1647, the Clothiers stated that their opponents engrossed and exported wool,¹⁸⁰ while the Staplers denied these accusations, and informed the Council that they were the "special instruments" to overthrow a great monopoly planned by

the Clothiers.¹⁸¹ From 1647 to 1653 the arguments of the Clothiers and Staplers took up much of the Council's time. The Staplers insisted that they performed a useful function in sorting wools, and distributing the long fleeces to the combers and the short ones to the Clothiers. They were particularly useful to the poorer Clothiers, "who are able to lay out no more money than for the very sort of Wool which they use," and could not afford to travel far to fetch their supplies. The Staplers claimed that, if they were dissolved, the effect would be to concentrate too much power in the hands of the richer Clothiers. The wool-growers would be forced to sell exclusively to them, and, though they might protest that they would give a fair price for the wool, "constant Experience and common Reason teacheth, that if the Clothiers bee the sole buyers, they will take off the Wool from the Grower at what time they please and at what price they please." It is wilfully malicious, say the Staplers, to confuse them with "broggers and jobbers" under the common name of engrossers. The latter are true interlopers in the clothing industry, "being Inne-keepers, Taylors, Glovers, etc.," and have increased rapidly since 1624, but the Staplers are a quite distinct body, who fulfil a useful purpose.¹⁸²

The attack on the functions of the Staplers involved a criticism of the Fellmongers, who carried wool and wool-fells from one part of the country to another. In 1652, the Essex clothiers engaged in manufacturing the new drapery petitioned the Council to put an end to the Fellmongers' trade, on the grounds that they forestalled the market, engrossed trade, and mixed together different sorts of wool.¹⁸³ The Staplers turned against their companions in adversity, and declared that, while it was the trade of a Fellmonger only to buy wool-fells and sheep skins, many of them bought and sold large quantities of fleece-wools.¹⁸⁴ In 1652, the Fellmongers submitted their defence to the Council for Regulating Trade. They pointed out that it was generally true that both nations and individuals were dependent upon one another in carrying on their trade,¹⁸⁵ and that this general fact was particularly true in the case of wool, the staple commodity of the kingdom. The Fellmongers were indispensable in distributing wool to the poorer clothiers and to the remoter parts of the country, such as Yorkshire, Lancashire, and Cumberland. Another advantage of the Fellmongers was that they gave credit, and it was on credit that the majority of the Clothiers relied.

"Take all the Clothiers in this Commonwealth," said the petitioners, "wee conceave about two-thirds deale upon Creditt, many of them never able to buy a pack with readye monie."¹⁸⁶

Despite the Staplers' protests to the contrary, the Clothiers opened their vindication by identifying their opponents with those interlopers, who "doe goe Betweene the Barke and the Tree, between the Grower and the Manufacturer, and Ingrosse the greatest part of the wooll, " so that the clothier cannot find work for the poor, nor export wool at reasonable prices.¹⁸⁷ The Staplers have no right to claim that they perform useful functions as sorters, for it is the Clothiers who are best fitted to sort their own wool, and not engrossers like the Staplers, who know nothing about the wool's intrinsic quality and judge only by the verdict of the market. As to their much vaunted performances as middlemen, here they are superfluous, for the well-to-do Clothier can go to the grower and buy wool as well as the Staplers can do it for him. The poor Clothiers have often been injured by the Staplers, and it would be far better for such men to become journeymen and work for those who can afford to buy direct from the growers. Another iniquity of which the Staplers are guilty is that of forestalling the market. When big demands are being made on the Clothiers' resources, the Staplers get in before them and buy up all the available wool, and then sell it to them at fancy prices. This offence is aggravated by the fact that often they are not wool-buyers by profession, but men who pursue other occupations and regard wool-buying merely as another source of gain.¹⁸⁸ The Clothiers conclude by saying that it is sometimes objected that to restrain "broggers and jobbers" is to destroy freedom of trade, but absolute freedom of trade is contrary to all established theory or practice.¹⁸⁹

In 1651, the dispute between the Clothiers and Staplers came before the Council of Trade. In vain the Staplers tried to dissociate themselves from the mere interlopers, and declared that all such offenders should be put down. The Committee for Trade appointed by the Common Council of the City of London reported to the Council of Trade that they had considered the petition of many freemen of the City against the Staplers, and had inquired into the nature and functions of the Staple. They had come to the conclusion that, though the Staplers once had a legal existence, it had expired since the exportation of wool was forbidden. The

economic effects of their trade were altogether disastrous. They were mainly responsible for the dearness of wool and cloth, for they engrossed most of the wool in the country and sold it at the highest rates. Secondly, they were accused of bringing English goods into disrepute, for they bought wool of several districts and varying kinds, and sold it, mixed together, to the clothier, who worked it up into imperfect cloth. Thirdly, the Staplers were responsible for the fact that "the Manufacture of England is much disparaged and lost in its esteeme beyond the Seas. And from hence it follows that multitudes of people whoe by makeing of Cloth, and meanes of the woollen trade, could bee employed and maintayned, are left without meanes of livelyhood, Workemen of our owne Countrey are inticed or enforced beyond the Seas", and the clothing trade, which was at one time monopolized by England, now flourishes in other countries.¹⁹⁰ The Mayor, Constables and Society of the Staplers denied the truth of this indictment, and reiterated their claim to usefulness in sorting and distributing wool.¹⁹¹

As a result of the foregoing report, the Government seems either to have threatened or to have actually taken some action against the wool buyers, both Staplers and Fellmongers. In 1652, the Oxfordshire Fellmongers petitioned the Council to secure their privileges and allow them to go on purchasing wools, which they sold to poor clothiers who could buy wool only in small parcels. The Buckinghamshire Fellmongers presented a similar plea that their privileges might be restored to them.¹⁹² More significant was a petition to the Committee for Trade from the Earl of Westmoreland and other Northamptonshire wool growers. They declared that certain so-called Clothiers were endeavouring to monopolize the trade of wool-buying, and they pointed out that, if this trade got into the hands of a few men, prices would immediately rise, and less fortunate members of the trade would be ruined.¹⁹³ The inhabitants of Romney Marsh asked that wool-selling might be made a free trade. Their sole livelihood depended on breeding cattle and selling wool, but lately there had been an attempt to engross the latter trade, "to the greate prejudice of the commonwealth, and the undoing of your petitioners and many thousands besides."¹⁹⁴

It is difficult to determine the rights and wrongs of this wrangle between the Clothiers and the Staplers. Probably the Clothiers who petitioned the Council represented the more prosperous members of their trade, who could themselves

dispense with the services of a middleman and resented his bolstering up the small clothier, whom they wished to convert into a journeyman.¹⁹⁵ From the petitions which were presented to the Council by the Earl of Westmoreland and the inhabitants of Romney, it seems likely that the curtailing of the Staplers' activities did not produce good results. On the other hand, there is no doubt that the clothing trade was suffering from an unusually acute breakdown of regulation at this time, and it is probable that the line which divided the Staplers from the interlopers was, as the clothiers said, very narrow.

(b) THE REGULATION OF INDUSTRY IN GENERAL

The problems presented by the clothing industry were unusually urgent and had demanded attention from the earliest years of the Interregnum, but, as soon as the wars were over and military affairs no longer occupied the foremost place, the attention of the Government was directed to industrial questions in general. In 1650, Parliament passed a comprehensive Act for Advancing and Regulating Trade which showed that, though they might be ready to criticize certain traditional aspects of regulation, they had no intention of leaving trade and industry to their own unfettered development. The preamble stated that Parliament had taken into consideration how to advance the trade and industry of the nation,¹⁹⁶ and had come to the conclusion that this could best be achieved by setting up a body of commissioners "as a standing counsel" for the regulation of trade. These commissioners were to consider how trade might be distributed throughout the country, so that one part might not be unduly rich and another part unduly poor, and they were to investigate the manufacture of all native commodities and see that they were well and truly made. The constitutions and ordinances of the various companies of merchants and craftsmen were to be investigated, "to the end that if any of them tend to the hurt of the Publique, they may be laid down, in such manner as Parliament shall think fit." For the rest, the powers of the commissioners were concerned mainly with the departments of foreign and colonial trade and exchanges.¹⁹⁷

In 1651, the Council of Trade made a series of reports to the Council of State,¹⁹⁸ the general tenour of which was that, unless the regulation of industry were drastically reformed,

trade would decay and thousands of people be reduced to poverty. The Government was reminded that at least two-thirds of the nation depended on some sort of trade, and that it was therefore highly impolitic to ignore the prevalent complaints of its decline. Deficient organization had far-reaching consequences, and the report declared that "the grieves and Complaints of all the meaner sort of people, cannot, without a Reforming and Regulating our Inland Trade, possibly be eased". The case of the clothing industry was merely one instance of a general evil. Everywhere, English manufactures were falling into disrepute and being replaced by foreign goods. Chief among the abuses which were practised were the corrupt dyeing of silk and the mixing of copper with gold and silver thread, "with the like frauds and adulterations . . . in most other Manufactures and handicraft Trades, to the great detriment and Cozinnage of the Commonwealth."¹⁹⁹

Though Commonwealth advisers and statesmen were groping towards some more efficient and centralized method of dealing with industrial problems, their actual administration proceeded, in the main, along conventional lines. Despite a strong tendency to suspect corporations of being monopolistic,²⁰⁰ they were by no means entirely discredited as instruments of regulation. In their reports on the abuses in manufacture, the Council of Trade declared that one of the causes thereof was the absence or weakness of corporations, and advised that they should be strengthened and, where necessary, reformed.²⁰¹ The Framework Knitters pressed strongly for incorporation as a means of preventing their best workmen from leaving the country. They declared that if trades were left to themselves, "they are very apt to become volant . . . into neighbouring places and Regions alwaies hospitable to so welcome guests." They had already suffered in this respect, for William Lea, of Calverton in Nottinghamshire, had asked for permission to go to France, and W. Jones had already gone to Amsterdam. The general advantages of incorporation had been proved by experience, and there were specially good reasons why the petitioners should be incorporated. By their framework knitting, they were able to turn out a large number of garments suitable for all sorts of people, they employed a great many workpeople, and they imported raw silk at low rates and exported it in a finished condition at much higher rates, the difference being so much clear gain to the commonwealth.²⁰² In answer to

this petition, an order of incorporation was granted to the Framework Knitters in 1657.²⁰³ Matters did not go smoothly with the new incorporation, for in 1658 they told the Protector that, despite the powers given to them to pass bye-laws, they were unable to do so. There was a danger that frames would be exported, and that other nations would usurp English trade, make inferior goods and sell them at lower rates.²⁰⁴ The only other fresh incorporation which took place during the Interregnum was that of the Needlemakers in November, 1656.²⁰⁵

The Master and Wardens of the Pinmakers attempted to persuade Parliament to strengthen their corporation, and reminded them that a Parliamentary committee had been set up "to examine and report on all grievances occasioned by evil-disposed persons who, from the distractions of the times, took occasion to do things destructive to the Commonwealth". This committee had been approached without effect, and the Pinmakers now asked Parliament to confirm their charter.²⁰⁶ Abuses in the manufacture of gold and silver wire led to a plea for incorporation, which was described by *Mercurius Politicus* as a "Licence with Authoritie to deceive the Commonwealth". The best remedy, according to this journal, was to appoint a sworn officer, who had no connection with the industry, to search out and punish offenders. The idea that regulation of a trade could be left safely to its members was scoffed at, for "the Gold Wyer Drawers, they are the parties who have the profit by the fraud of making slight threed stuffe, and therefore it is no reason the whole regulation should be left to them; for where the felon makes the Hue and Cry, the Thief will never be found".²⁰⁷

According to traditional ideas, a well-regulated system of industry depended largely on the proper enforcement of the apprenticeship laws. Here the Government showed a decided tendency to over-ride the regulations of 1563, which had been framed when industry was already beginning to outgrow the static conditions which made them applicable, and which were an insuperable barrier to the fluidity and transference of labour which war-time conditions made essential. In 1642, an ordinance was passed which stated that all those apprentices who enlisted should be secured against their masters from loss and inconvenience occasioned by forfeiture of their bonds and covenants. After their military service was at an end, the masters should receive their apprentices again, "without imposing upon them any

Punishment, Loss or Prejudice, for their absence in the Defence of the Commonwealth." If Parliament considered that the masters had suffered any considerable loss by their apprentices' absence, they should be recompensed out of the public funds.²⁰⁸ In 1643, a similar ordinance was passed with reference to the watermen enlisting under Sir William Waller.²⁰⁹ An Act of 1650 repeated the terms of the earlier measures and provided that the Militia Commissioners were to see to the execution of the indemnity.²¹⁰ In 1654, a report was made to the Council on the petition of several "reduced officers and soldiers" for leave to betake themselves to honest callings, without serving the term of seven years' apprenticeship demanded by the trades. The Council ordered that whoever had served in the army for three years between 1642 and 1653 should be able to set up in any trade of which he was capable, "any law or custom notwithstanding."²¹¹

It is obvious that these orders gave a very large loophole for the complete evasion of the apprenticeship laws, and there are several indications that workmen were ready to take advantage of it. In 1647, twenty-seven "ancient weavers" of Westbury complained that, whereas by former good laws no one could exercise his trade till he had served his apprenticeship and reached the age of twenty-four, "now in these disordered times many apprentices having forsaken parents and master under cover of following the wars, the wars being ended, refuse to serve out their time, but before they are 18 or 20 years old betake themselves to marriage and gaining a loom's work for themselves; whereby the ancient weavers are many times by-put beside of their work, and sometimes the master undercrept by him who should be his servant." This plea was marked by the Justices as "noe order".²¹² The records of the Carpenters' Company during these years contain many instances of apprentices marrying before their indentures had expired, and in 1655 the Court stated that "whereas divers persons of this Company have great employment in building and cannot do their work in time for want of workmen", they had decided to allow all members, whether full-fledged workmen or not, to keep one extra apprentice apiece.²¹³ In Hertfordshire, a considerable number of men were indicted for using various arts without having served their apprenticeship,²¹⁴ but, on the whole, it is likely that the Government's policy gave legal sanction to a slackening of the apprenticeship laws which was

a natural consequence of the economic circumstances of the time.

That part of the Statute of Artificers which dealt with the assessment of wages has aroused far greater controversy than the sections devoted to apprenticeship regulations. Thorold Rogers saw it in the light of a conspiracy to deprive the British workman of his wages, while other writers have regarded it as a logical development of the policy of an enlightened bureaucracy. It is probable that Elizabethan statesmen deserve neither the praise nor the blame which has been lavished upon them. They were faced by a series of economic and financial changes which baffled an age untrained in scientific economics, and which they attempted to solve rather by generalizing from practical expedients than by evolving a new system of legislation. The wage clauses of the statute of 1563 were, in some respects, merely a codification of former Statutes of Labourers and of municipal experiments, but in two important matters they introduced a new principle. In the first place, provision was definitely made for a national system of regulation, and, in the second place, the principle of a fixed maximum was replaced by that of a sliding scale.

There has been much discussion as to the period over which the Act was administered. The most general view is that, in common with other aspects of a system of paternal government, it was administered with comparative regularity up to 1640, but that the Great Rebellion involved the fatal weakening both of the ideals and of the machinery which had made it a reality.²¹⁵ From an *a priori* standpoint, this view does not seem altogether justified. It is true that influential opinion under the Commonwealth was opposed to some aspects of the control which Charles had exercised, and that it had nothing but condemnation for ecclesiastical interference, but the statesmen of the period never contemplated the introduction of a policy of *laissez-faire* in economic relations. They retained a policy of regulation in so far as it suited their notions of expediency, and it is likely that the regulation of wages fell within these limits. Except when applied to the special case of the clothing trade, the Act of 1563 had been framed and administered with the object of checking the excessive demands which workmen might make on their employers. On the other hand, the adoption of a sliding scale had made it possible to avoid injustice by allowing wages to bear some relation to fluctuating prices and to changes in the industrial situation. Both these points would appeal

to the Commonwealth statesmen, who were faced with an abnormal economic situation.

Parliament made only two announcements on the subject of wage regulation, but these were definite enough to indicate its general policy. In April, 1649, the Commons ordered the Lord Mayor and justices within the City to execute the statutes for settling artificers' wages, "for their better Relief and Subsistence in these dear Times; And that no Person or Persons presume to hinder the putting the same in Execution; And that Care be taken annually to do the same, if need require, according to the Tenor of the said Laws." All the justices throughout England and Wales were ordered to take the same injunctions to heart.²¹⁸ Again, in October, 1656, it was referred to a committee "to consider of the Wages of Artificers, Labourers and Servants, and to present a Bill for further Redress herein; and for the more effectual putting the same in execution." The matter must have been considered important, for the committee included Whitelocke, Major-General Boteler, Major-General Berry and Sir Christopher Packe.²¹⁷

The argument that the dislocation of the machinery of government during the Interregnum would prevent wage regulation from being enforced is tenable, but it is not borne out by such statistical evidence as exists. During the period 1640-60, there are sixteen assessments, including re-issues, which are given in full, and this number contrasts favourably with those issued during the preceding twenty years, which only reach seven.²¹⁸ Once the assessments were made, the responsibility for their enforcement rested largely with the village constables. There is little evidence during any period as to the efficacy of their action, but, during the Interregnum, there are indications that it had not altogether ceased. At Thirske, in Yorkshire, in 1647, a warrant was issued against a man for "payeinge unreasonable wages to labourers contrary to the law".²¹⁹ In Hertfordshire, a recognizance was issued against two men for giving and taking wages contrary to the statutes. A draft order was sent to the constables in this county to take notice of "a statute" for hiring servants within two hundreds of the county. They were to keep a register of these servants, give them a certificate containing the name of the master, the term for which they were hired, and their wages and dwelling place, and the high constables were to return the list of particulars to the justices. The constables were also ordered to "take up" all travellers

who came out of the country to work in hay or corn harvest without bringing a testimonial, and masters and servants alike were forbidden to enter into any irregular agreements.²²⁰

Contemporary pamphlets and the preambles to wage assessments indicate that there were strong motives for issuing and enforcing assessments during the Interregnum. The first of these was the rise in prices which took place from 1646 to 1651. During the twenty years before 1640, wheat prices seldom rose above 45*s.* a quarter, but in 1646-7, they jumped to nearly 52*s.*, in 1647-8 they were 62*s.* 6*d.*, and in 1648-9 they reached 67*s.* 10½*d.*²²¹ J. Cooke described the hard lot of the poor labourer, who complained: "I would work almost my heart out, but I can scarce get a day's work, everything rises in price but that which should rise, the day labourer's wages; many work now for a groat a day which had 6*d.* and 8*d.*"²²²

It is clear that some of the wage assessments issued during the Interregnum were made with the object of meeting the rise in prices. At Chelmsford in Essex, the justices assembled in 1651 and made a fresh assessment, "having a special regard and consideration to the price at this time of all kinds of victuals and apparel, both linen and woollen, and all other necessary charges wherewith artificers, labourers and servants have been more grievously charged with than in time past." The assessment which followed was exceedingly careful and full, dealing minutely with artificers, such as coopers, millwrights and joiners, with agricultural labourers and with clothiers.²²³ Rogers takes from the Rawlinson MSS. the Gloucestershire assessments for 1632 and 1655, and a comparison of the two illustrates, in detail, the rise in wages which took place during the Commonwealth. According to the earlier assessment, a bailiff of husbandry was to receive £4 yearly, and a chief hind £3, while in the lower grades a day labourer was to have 8*d.* daily (without food), and a tasker 8*d.* in summer. "Which afterwards," says the later assessment, "since these troubles hath been increased, and in the year 1655 were thus assessed," so that a bailiff was to receive £5, a hind £4, a day labourer 10*d.* and a tasker 10*d.*²²⁴

The Derbyshire and Somerset assessments show the same advance in wages. In the former county, the assessment for 1648 marks a general increase in rates as compared with that of 1634, a bailiff of husbandry receiving 7*s.* 4*d.* in the earlier period and 9*s.* 8*d.* in the later, and a mower's wages advancing from 10*d.* to 1*s.* 3*d.*²²⁵ The Somerset justices made six

assessments during the Interregnum, the first in 1648 and the last in 1655. On the occasion of the first, the justices stated that they had desired the Grand Jury to present their opinion as to what wages should be assessed for the year, "respect being had to the present tyme." Men servants were allotted £4 a year, mowers of grass 1s. 4d. daily, hay-makers (finding themselves) 1s., and helpers at corn harvest 1s. 2d. It was stated that the "said Rates for such as find themselves are raised in regard the greate price of all sortes of provision at this present". In April, 1650, the same wage schedule was issued with the same remarks, but, a year later, the justices, with the advice of the Grand Jury, issued a fresh assessment. Men servants now had £4 6s. 8d., mowers of grass 1s. 6d., haymakers still 1s., and helpers at corn harvest 1s. 4d. In April, 1652, there was a further advance in wages, men servants receiving £4 10s. and mowers 1s. 8d. Two years later, wages had dropped to about the same level as that of the first assessment of the period, and the 1655 assessment confirmed this downward tendency.²²⁶ This movement in wages corresponds to the movement in wheat prices traced by Rogers.²²⁷

While the justices wished to bring the wage level into some rough correspondence with the rise in prices, they were determined to repress sternly any attempt on the part of the labourers to obtain what they considered to be undue advantages. There seems to have been a shortage of agricultural labour during the Commonwealth, probably due to the demands made by the armies upon the rural population, both for recruits and for supplies. Pseudonismus, whose lack of sympathy with the labouring classes must be taken into account, writes: "in all or most towns where the fields lie open there is a new broode of Intruders . . . upstarts who will not worke unlesse they may have such excessive Wages as they themselves desire."²²⁸ In another pamphlet he says: "There is with us now rather a scarcitie than a superfluity of servants, their wages being advanced to such extraordinary heights that they are likely ere long to bee masters and their masters servants . . ."²²⁹

At the Wiltshire quarter sessions in June, 1655, the justices complained that, whereas the rates of wages had been proclaimed, "young people both men and maids, fitting for service, will not go abroad to service without they may have excessive wages, but will rather work at home at their own hands, whereby the rating of wages will take little effect . . ."

It was therefore ordered that no young people, of an age and class suitable for service, should be allowed to remain at home, "but shall with all convenient speed betake themselves to service for the wages aforesaid, which if they refuse to do the justices shall proceed against them."²³⁰ In 1655, the Wiltshire justices made a full assessment, which was continued by means of re-enactments down to the reign of James II. On the first occasion of this assessment, it was stated that the justices, having called before them discreet and grave persons of the county, "and haveinge considered together with respect to the present times and the cheapnes of all sort of provision . . . with due consideration of all other circumstances," had decided to fix the following maximum wages.²³¹ A very full assessment follows, including wages by the day and year for all classes of agricultural workers, for master and journeymen artificers, and for weavers and spinners. The wages of agricultural labourers show a slight increase on those issued for 1635, a mower of grass at the earlier date receiving 7*d.* and a hay-maker 5*d.*, while in 1655 they received 8*d.* and 6*d.* respectively.²³²

In the West Riding of Yorkshire, there was a similar complaint that servants had become unreasonable. The justices issued a wage list at the Easter Sessions of 1641, but in the autumn they had to admit that their orders had been largely ineffectual. They declared that: "upon the generall complaints of the inhabitantes of these partes, that servants refuse to worke for reasonable wages, and cannot be hired for competent allowance as formerlye, makeing advantage of the much business of the time," it was ordered that the high constables should proclaim the statutory wages and see that they were enforced. The petty constables were told to present all instances of law breaking.²³³ In 1647, a full assessment was made, covering all the principal occupations of the West Riding, and dealing with agricultural labour in great detail, according to the qualifications of the worker and the time of employment.²³⁴

A London assessment of 1655 was made on the same assumption that workmen were inclined to demand excessive wages. For some time, it had been the custom occasionally to consult the guilds on the subject of wage assessments. In this instance, the Carpenters' Company was asked for its opinion and replied: "Wee, the Master and Wardens of the Company of Carpenters, in pursuance of your lordships' desire

for the reducing of the excessive wages of Labourers and Workmen in these times of great plenty," humbly conceive that wages should be at the following rates: no carpenter, bricklayer or other handicraftsman to have more than 2*s.* 6*d.* daily, no journeyman or apprentice more than 2*s.*, or 1*s.* 6*d.*, according to whether he has worked for two years or less, no labourer more than 1*s.* 4*d.*, while a serving man's wages are not to exceed £5 yearly. Both the Lord Mayor and the justices adopted these rates in their assessments for 1655, the justices stating that they acted "respecting the plenty of the present time, and the Cheapnesse of all sorts of provisions . . ." ²³⁵

There seems little evidence to support the view that the assessment of wages received its death blow with the fall of Charles I. The occasional attempts to use the Act of 1563 to protect the textile workers seem to have ceased after 1640, ²³⁶ but these applications of the Act were always the exception rather than the rule. Nevertheless, it is probable that the foundations of a rigid system of wage regulation were beginning to be undermined by the development of that individual freedom in industry which received its blessing from Commonwealth preachers and philosophers ²³⁷ By 1720, opposition to the statutory assessment of wages had become clearly defined. At this date, a Bill concerning the tailoring trade was before Parliament, and the journeymen's observations on each clause are printed in a contemporary pamphlet. When it was proposed that the justices should fix wages and hours of work, the journeymen said: "If the Justices settle the Men's Wages, how is it possible that each Man shall be rewarded according to his Merit? . . . And such Men that are but indifferent Workmen will never be employed, by Reason that Masters are obliged to give them certain Wages, which may possibly be more than such a Man can deserve." ²³⁸

In the regulation of industry, the Commonwealth Governments displayed little originality so far as their actual policy was concerned, and the same is still more true of their attempts to encourage trade and industry. There were projects in plenty, but it was left to the more firmly established Governments of the Restoration to translate them into effective practice. The statesmen of the Interregnum were incited to follow the example of their Dutch rivals and build a new era of national greatness on a commercial foundation. Englishmen regarded the achievements of the

Low Countries with a mixture of envy, hatred and admiration, which, in some ways, recalls our attitude towards pre-war Germany. While Holland had transformed a desert into a fertile land, England had allowed herself to be choked by the silver spoon in her mouth. One writer says: "We had all things of our own in superabundance to increase traffic, and timber to building, and commodities of our own to load about 1999 ships and vessels at one time, besides the great fishing . . . yet our ships and mariners decline and traffic and merchandize daily decay." This scandal arises through our neglect to develop the advantages which Heaven has showered upon us, as when, by means of our cloth going out rough, undressed and undyed, the manufactures of the Low Countries are increased.²³⁹

Particular points in which we might beat the Hollander at his own game were stressed by pamphleteers and statesmen. To capture their fishing trade was the most obvious and popular expedient. S. Smith described how the Hollanders' supremacy in this industry enabled them to employ many thousands of families at home, "besides their forraigne employment in the way of Merchandizing which ariseth thereby, and is of greater consequence unto the States than the Indies to the King of Spaine."²⁴⁰ Another writer declared that the Dutch should be completely ousted from the fishing grounds in the North Sea, on which they had encroached, and that England should develop all other areas which lay within her control.²⁴¹ So far as concrete achievement goes, all that can be laid to the Government's credit in this direction is the allotment of a few fishing vessels for the employment of the poor and the development of the fishing trade.²⁴²

An interesting and fairly widespread movement at this time was the agitation for lower customs duties and free ports. Here again, England was profiting by the example of the Low Countries, for the rigid mercantilists, as represented by Louis XIV and Colbert, still taught that a strict tariff barrier was the best means of attaining national prosperity. The Dutch, says one writer, exact only about one-tenth of the customs duties demanded by other nations, "which draweth all Nations to traffic with them," and thus in the long run they amass larger customs returns than their short-sighted neighbours.²⁴³ Thomas Violet admitted that high duties might bring immediate prosperity to a state, but he declared that, in the long run, their effect was ruinous.²⁴⁴ Violet was

an enthusiastic supporter of free ports. "If you will make the trade of the nation flourish," he said, "I humbly conceive you must make all Ports, where there are now Customs paid, to be free Ports, for some Commodities," such as wine, fish, salt, corn, flax and other bulky goods.²⁴⁵ Another writer stated as an absolute maxim that: "it is not the high Customes that will enrich a Nation, but Multiplicity of Trade."²⁴⁶ In 1652, W. Dugard, printer to the Council of State, produced a pamphlet dealing exclusively with the question of free ports. The pamphleteer described the way in which Holland had realized the demand for a sort of international storehouse and turned it to her own advantage. The Hollanders, he said, fetched goods from Russia, Norway, Poland, Prussia, Sweden and Denmark, "and bringing them into their own Countries do laye them there at pleasure; till by advice weekly from all other parts, they are directed where to find a Market for them." While Holland acted like a great merchant, England was more nearly akin to "a countrie Gentleman or ordinary Tradesman", who was concerned chiefly with his own immediate needs. Unless our ports were made free, all discussions would "still but terminate in some Advice or other about Regulating our Consumption; and have no other good at furthest but preventional, that our Ballance of Imports exceed not our Exports."²⁴⁷

This agitation for free ports and lower customs duties was not confined to pamphleteers. In 1649, the Commons ordered that the whole question should be referred to the Navy Committee, who were to weigh it carefully, and take special heed that the state should not suffer in its customs and excise.²⁴⁸ One of the duties of the commissioners set up by the Act of 1650 was to advise how free ports might be established in various parts of the country,²⁴⁹ and in 1651 the London Common Council noted that the Committee for Trade appointed by the City had been ordered to prepare a petition to Parliament for London to be a free port.²⁵⁰

The London merchants and tradesmen presented two petitions to the Protector in 1654, protesting against the buyer being deprived of the re-allowance on excise on foreign goods which had been altered, or sold for exportation.²⁵¹ They declared that all who understood trade knew that the best means to advance it was by an extension of free ports, whereas the present policy of the Government threatened to "contract home trade and almost extinguish foreign". One of the

chief commodities exported from England to America was foreign linen, but, since the planters could not obtain their linen by way of England without paying twenty-five per cent to thirty per cent more than if they bought it direct, they were likely to forsake English markets altogether, and buy all their commodities, including woollen goods, from other European countries. It was hopeless to look for an industrial revival while the export of foreign materials which had been manufactured in England was so heavily taxed. The petitioners insisted that they had no desire to chafe against necessary taxation, "but doe only petition that your honours would please to weigh in the ballance of your wisdome the wayes of Raising it soe as it may not Ruine trade, And destroy the Tree in the manner of plucking the fruits."²⁵² Major General Lambert reported on the merchants' plea that, "they presented something disadvantageous to trade, and particularly the withdrawing of the re-allowance of customs on foreign goods re-exported." The committee who had considered the case were of opinion that, on the exportation of goods which had already been imported, the first buyer should halve the import duty and all the excise, as before. The Council agreed with this report, but referred it back to the committee to prepare an ordinance and confer with the customs' officials and the merchants.²⁵³ A week later, Lambert reported that an ordinance had been prepared by his committee,²⁵⁴ and this measure was immediately passed into law. By its terms, the excise was to be refunded on goods which were re-exported.²⁵⁵

A general reduction of customs duties was advocated by a committee which reported in April 1654. They said that "the present rates are exorbitant, and that the imposition of great taxes on portable goods is but an encouragement to escape them, and the desire of gain leads to great hazard. A more moderate imposition would increase the revenues. For Spanish tobacco, the receipts are greater now when the tax is 12*d.* than when it was 3*s.*" Even the prohibition of the export of bullion is a doubtful advantage, for the severe laws which prevail in such countries as Spain merely divert the trade into the hands of small men who have nothing to lose.²⁵⁶ Already, in 1652 and 1653, it had been suggested that one method of reviving the cloth trade was to reduce the excise, and this expedient was adopted immediately after the Excise Committee had made their report.²⁵⁷

(c) THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF IMMIGRATION

The encouragement of immigration was one of the most solid achievements of the Commonwealth Governments, their activity being in marked contrast to the lukewarm attitude of Charles, and the persecutions of Laud. In no direction did the Archbishop's sacrifice of expediency to religious principle come out more clearly than in his treatment of the Protestant immigrants. He attempted to bring the settlers within the narrow confines of his own conceptions of church discipline, and, immediately before the Civil Wars, cited the ministers of the Dutch churches at Maidstone and Sandwich to appear before him.²⁵⁸ His interference pressed hardly on the Kentish churches, and, according to Prynne, they were "molested and disquieted some three or four years space, some of them interdicted, suspended, and shut up for a time for refusing conformity—others of them dissolved, their ministers deserting them rather than submit to these injunctions."²⁵⁹ Pym, on the occasion when the Bill concerning Laud was sent to the Upper House, declared that he had made a serious breach between the Church of England and the reformed churches by suppressing the latter's privileges.²⁶⁰

After 1640, religious bias and business considerations pointed towards tolerance and even active encouragement of the Protestant strangers. Sir Thomas Roe, speaking of the condition of the clothing trade, declared that a constructive policy was impossible without the encouragement of immigration. Cloth as at present made in England was heavy, and suitable only for cold climates, but, if Walloon immigration were encouraged and the manufacture of the new draperies thereby increased, we should soon be able to use up our full supply of wool. Roe adds that it is, of course, necessary that "these strangers, so fit to be nourished, and being Protestants", may enjoy the same privileges as were granted to them by Queen Elizabeth. "And certainly," he says, "the settling of religion secure in England (the fear whereof made many weak minds to waver and abandon this country) is, and will be, a great means to resettle both the great and lesser manufactures of woollen commodities."²⁶¹ Lewis Roberts cited the example of the Germans, who excelled other nations in their policy of encouraging strangers by admitting them freely to all their trades, and encouraging them "by large allowances and salaries" to teach their arts to native craftsmen.²⁶² Violet urged English statesmen to

follow a similar policy, and declared that experience had shown that all "merchant strangers" brought nothing but good to England. The towns where they had settled, notably Colchester, Norwich and Canterbury, had derived great benefit from them, "the people being willing to paie all duties and helpful to their Neighbors, an industrious Nation, and by their frugalitie and long continuance in following their trade attein the reward of their vigilance, beeing Riches." Then, having made their fortune, they disperse it among the English by intermarriage.²⁶³

It was true that most of the Protestant immigrants were well-fitted to win salvation in both worlds. In 1649, a series of propositions for developing colonial resources and improving the fishing trade were laid before the Government by a group of foreign Protestants. They described themselves as "most of them Merchants, in number about 300, their wealth about £30,000", which they proposed to bring over to England and invest in their own scheme. Undue modesty was not their besetting sin, and they went on to say that: "the persons of those that made these propositions are not . . . to bee undervalued, beinge men of a considerable welth, most of them Marchants and well versed in all misteries of trade, and such as (in relation to religion and civill liberty) have chosen this nation as a place (both in its situation and present constitution of government) better fitted for trade, strength and liberty than their own native Countries."²⁶⁴

There was no wholesale influx of Protestant refugees during the Interregnum, but the Government lent its support to those who were already here and encouraged the establishment of fresh congregations. Occasionally, an expression of general policy showed that it was ready to favour Protestant immigration. On the first opportunity after Laud's impeachment, the two "colloquies" of the French and Dutch churches met in London to consider the state of all the reformed churches in England. It was decided to present a petition for an Act of Parliament to confirm them in the free exercise of their religion and discipline.²⁶⁵ On 21st January, 1643, the Lords ordered that there should be a measure passed for granting the reformed churches of the realm the same liberty in the exercise of their religion which they enjoyed at home, and which had been allowed in England since Edward VI's reign.²⁶⁶ The most striking declaration of general policy came from Cromwell. Mr. D'Espagne, one of the most popular foreign preachers of the time, dedicated

a tract to him, and appended to one of the minister's publications is the copy of a speech entitled, "The thanks returned to the Lord Generall in the name of the French Church, Gathered in the Chapell at Somerset house, by John D'Espayne." A note follows that "His Excellence most graciously did answer us; and having declared that our thankfulness were due more unto the State than to his person . . . but most remarkably pronounced these words which we never shall forget: 'I love strangers, but principally those who are of our religion.' " ²⁶⁷

The record of particular groups of Protestant settlers shows that the Government was ready to protect their rights, even in the face of opposition from the inhabitants of the locality. In March, 1646, a petition from the Protestant strangers at Dover was read in the Lords and referred to a committee. The petitioners explained that, being desirous to serve God in their own tongue, they had petitioned first the magistrates of the town and then the County Committee for permission to set up a Walloon Church in Dover. The Committee had agreed with the project, but declared that they were not authorized to set up a congregation, such power residing solely in the hands of Parliament, whose help was now invoked.²⁶⁸ On 10th April, the Earl of Warwick reported from a committee in favour of the petition, and in the same year an ordinance was passed to erect a French or Walloon Church at Dover, with the same discipline and privileges as had been granted to other foreign congregations. The Mayor and other officers of the town were ordered to uphold their privileges upon all occasions.²⁶⁹ Similar orders were given some years later with regard to the Walloon Church at Canterbury.²⁷⁰

The history of the foreign Protestants in Hatfield Chase and other reclaimed fenlands was very stormy. When Vermuyden began to drain the Chase in 1626, the enterprise was financed by Dutch capitalists in London, Amsterdam and Dordrecht, and was executed with the help of workmen imported from Holland. In 1633, Vermuyden sold his share in the undertaking to a Frenchman, who introduced workmen from Normandy and Picardy.²⁷¹ Thus, the fenmen's opposition to the work of drainage would be accentuated by the additional insult of foreign labour.²⁷² In November, 1645, a petition was addressed to the Lords on behalf of the French and Dutch inhabitants within the improved grounds of Hatfield Chase, the Isle of Axholme, and the counties of York-

shire, Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire. They declared that the community which they represented had built many houses and a church, and had a "settled French Congregation" among them, consisting of about 1,000 souls. They complained that, about a month since, "a great Multitude of the meaner sort of the Inhabitants" raised a tumult, and, entering upon the petitioners' possessions within the manor of Epworth, threw down the fences and enclosures, and "destroyed the most Part of your Petitioners' Corn and Rape-seed there growing, to very good Value, with their Cattle . . ." They begged the House to take some course to settle them in their possessions and to suppress further riots.²⁷³

In 1650, the spasmodic outbursts of the fenmen reached a climax. Santoft church was pulled down, and the members of that congregation moved to Thorney Abbey in Cambridgeshire.²⁷⁴ In April, 1656, the Council considered a petition presented by the French and Dutch Protestants in and near Hatfield Chase. They recounted how, "being unable to exercise our religion at home, we fled here and had a church erected at Santoft," where they enjoyed freedom of worship until the rioters, led by Noddell, came and attacked them. This document, which was signed by fifty-four hands, was referred to a committee to report. Whalley was ordered to inquire into the rights and wrongs of the case, and meantime to keep the peace and see that the petitioners were allowed to worship undisturbed.²⁷⁵

The members of the Walloon Church at Norwich seem to have met with some opposition. They told the Protector in 1655 that they had long regarded England as their sanctuary, and had been granted patents from Edward VI. "But being chiefly handicraftsmen, we have lately been hindered in setting to work strangers who repair hither for the exercise of their religion . . ." A certificate was attached, given by the Mayor and justices in 1611, which stated that the strangers were submissive to the town government, and that "they are profitable to the State, and have not one beggar among them".²⁷⁶ A year later, the Council ordered the Mayor, Aldermen and justices of Norwich to see that the Walloons enjoyed all their former privileges.²⁷⁷

By encouraging Protestant strangers, the Government was going against the wishes of most native craftsmen. Already in 1641, the poor tradesmen of London complained that the numbers of French, Walloon and Dutch strangers

daily increased, and that all the trade of the City was becoming concentrated in their hands.²⁷⁸ The London apprentices declared that, though they often had enough capital to set up for themselves, "yet we dare not, for feare foreigners which never served their times in the City, having more customers than ourselves, should undoe us."²⁷⁹ In the same year, a petition was presented to the Commons by "an infinite number" of poor tradesmen living in London and its suburbs, complaining of the great number of aliens trading there. The petition was sent up to the Lords, with the comment that "the Necessity of this People hath transported them a little beyond the usual Form that Petitioners are to address themselves in."²⁸⁰

In 1654, the Masters and Wardens of the London handicraft companies told the story of their grievances to the Council of State. They related how the French and Dutch strangers living near London had petitioned the Parliament, not only for the free use of their religion, but also for the exercise of their trade. The case had been referred to the Council of State, which ordered the Lord Mayor to stop all proceedings against Protestant strangers for exercising their vocations. Thereupon, the London craftsmen had requested a hearing and a copy of the petition, both of which were granted, but since then nothing had been done to relieve them. The native craftsmen went on to remark that they had observed that the Parliament and Council of State were too ready to listen to the aliens, who often brought no good to the nation. Then followed a statement of the reasons why foreigners should not be allowed to trade in London. Englishmen, it was said, were sufficiently numerous and quite as skilful as aliens. They were compelled to serve apprenticeships, to be incorporated, and to submit to regulation and taxation, "so that strangers who have not these burdens can undersell them, invite over their own countrymen and engross trade." Moreover, the handicraft trades were a nursery of soldiers, and as such deserved encouragement. Charity should begin at home, for "if their being Protestants, fled hither because of persecution, be an argument that they should trade, it is a better argument for the natives."²⁸¹

In the London City records, there is evidence of the same opposition to the Government's policy of encouraging strangers. In 1649, the Common Council directed a committee to consider what penalties could be inflicted on foreigners

trading in the City,²⁸² and in 1657 a petition to Parliament was prepared by the Lord Mayor, Aldermen and the Common Council, stating that the demands of foreigners were becoming unbearable. "The better to establish themselves in their privileges and advantages and to become masters of what trade is yet remaining in the power of England," they were trying to become naturalized. The petitioners prayed that, if naturalization were granted, the Parliament would qualify it by imposing certain conditions.²⁸³ Later in the same year, the City petitioned again, declaring that, despite former customs, the strangers naturalized by the late order of Parliament alleged that they had to pay only such dues as fell on English subjects.²⁸⁴

To encourage Protestant immigration was a natural policy for the Interregnum Governments. The admission of the Jews, after their nominal exile from England since the time of Edward I, was a less obvious, and, in many ways, a more significant action. In speaking of statesmen such as Colbert and Cromwell, who inaugurated or consolidated the modern State, Sombart remarks that we are unable to avoid some reference to the Jews. "It would be like Faust without Mephistopheles."²⁸⁵ At a period when finance, trade and industry were entering upon a new phase, it is in keeping with Sombart's theory to find the Jews exercising a growing influence in the state. Even before 1640, there were considerable numbers of Jews in England, and in 1643 there was a further influx, due probably to the financial necessities of the Interregnum Governments.²⁸⁶ One of the meeting places of the Jewish community in London was the house of the Portuguese Ambassador, who was secretly a Jew. Lucien Wolf has investigated the fortunes of this group, and declares that the social condition of the community appears to have been excellent. All its members were respected merchants, and some of them were exceedingly wealthy. They owned a considerable amount of shipping, and their transactions extended to the Netherlands, France, Spain, Portugal, the Canary Islands, Italy, Syria, Brazil, and the East and West Indies. They dealt in bullion, cloth, wool, wine, hides, sugar, corn, timber and other important commodities.²⁸⁷

The outstanding figure in this community was Antonio Fernandez Carvajal, called by Violet "the Great Jew", whose activities represent, on a magnified scale, those of his fellow settlers. He came to London about 1630, and by 1643 had acquired an extremely important position.²⁸⁸

In that year, he presented a petition to the Lords for payment for a cargo of 300 barrels of gunpowder which had been consigned to him from Amsterdam, but which had been seized by the Parliament.²⁸⁹ Six years later, he was one of the five City merchants to whom the Council of State gave the army contract for corn.²⁹⁰ Yet more important were his dealings in bullion. Wolf estimates that he imported it at the rate of £100,000 a year, making returns to his foreign correspondents in English manufactures.²⁹¹ An entry in the State papers contains a declaration that he has imported into the country, within the last two years, Spanish money and bars of silver to the value of £200,000.²⁹² On another occasion, Carvajal told the Protector that he had "imported great store of plate and Bullion to this Cittye and would now perswade and encourage his correspondents to send more . . ." ²⁹³ The great Jew's importance was fully recognized both by his fellow merchants and by the Government. When, in 1645, he was denounced for transgressing the Act of Conformity, all his competitors and many other prominent merchants petitioned Parliament to protect him. The informer was summoned before the House of Lords, and the proceedings were stopped.²⁹⁴ In 1650, the Council of State ordered that Carvajal should not be molested in his trade, exchange or traffic, or in his private possessions by virtue of the warrant from the Council for seizing goods from the subjects of the King of Portugal.²⁹⁵

Thus, long before the Messianic agitation of Menasseh ben Israel, the Jews had gained an important position in the commercial and financial world. It is doubtful if the powerful business men, such as Carvajal, had any desire to drag the Jewish question into the limelight of public controversy; but, when the controversy had once begun, they supported their fellow countrymen whole-heartedly in their attempt to secure a definite legal footing in England.

Menasseh ben Israel, the man who was chiefly responsible for the agitation which led up to the re-admission of the Jews, was an Amsterdam rabbi of a romantic and idealistic disposition, who cherished dreams of the return of his race to England. In its devotion to the Old Testament, orthodox Puritanism had some affinity with Judaism, but it was among the Sects that Menasseh found the greatest enthusiasm. Some of the "Saints", including Everard the Leveller, called themselves Jews,²⁹⁶ and a petition was presented to Fairfax by some English sectaries in Amsterdam, urging him

to receive the Jews, and telling how "by discourse with them and serious perusal of the Prophets, both they and we find that the time of her call draweth nigh; whereby they together with us shall come to know the Emanuell . . ." ²⁹⁷ In his *Declaration to the Parliament*, Menasseh explained the motives which had drawn him to England. First was religion, "because the opinion of many Christians and mine doe concur here in, that we both believe that the restoring time of our Nation into their Native Countrey is very neer at hand." Then came commercial considerations, "for thence, I hope, there will follow a great blessing from God upon them, and a very abundant trading unto and from all parts of the World, not onely without prejudice to the English Nation, but for their Profit, both in Importation and Exportation of goods." Menasseh admits that the chief quality which endears immigrants to their adopted countries is the profit they bring, "a most powerful motive, and one which all the world professes before all other things." ²⁹⁸

Some objections were made on religious grounds to the coming of the Jews, ²⁹⁹ but these met with opposition from the growing ranks of those who thought that religion should not be allowed to encroach upon business. One writer declared that it was necessary to distinguish between the reception of men as ordinary citizens and as ministers, "as Ministers we may not receive them, but as men we may." To invest the civil magistrate with spiritual functions was to endow the State with the attributes of a Church, "which hath been and is the great delusion of Nations . . . God hath given Magistrates in our daies to see and distinguish between the civil Government of Nations, where they are to protect all who live in peace, and the Government of Christ in his Church, where they are to try doctrine and receive in upon the account of faith and obedience." ³⁰⁰ John Dury expressed similar opinions in a letter to Hartlib, in which he wrote that the admission of the Jews was purely a matter of expediency, and, as such, belonged to the province of the civil ruler. ³⁰¹

It is probable that Cromwell was more attracted by the commercial assets of the Jews than by their religious appeal, and Sombart even goes so far as to say that, in working for their admission, he was actuated solely by considerations of an economic nature. ³⁰² Apart from the power exercised by such individuals as Carvajal, the Jewish race as a whole played no small part in European commerce and finance. They controlled the Spanish and Portuguese trade and a great

part of the Levant trade. They had an interest in the Dutch East and West India Companies, and had helped to found the Hamburg Bank.³⁰³ This side of the case for re-admission was put before the Protector by Manuel Dormido, a Jew who had been ruined by the Portuguese conquest of Pernambuco. He petitioned the Protector for permission for him and his race to settle in England, pointing out the foolishness of a policy which sacrificed trade to religious prejudices. He admitted that Spain and Portugal were willing "to judge the hidden interiours onely Reserved to god Creator", but other and wiser nations were ready to admit the Jews, "by reason they have allwayes been faithfull and true patricians, originating new trafficks and comerses and increasing those allready comon and accustomed." The Creator, says Dormido, has a special interest in the English nation, and, if the Jews are admitted, there is no doubt that all parties will flourish.³⁰⁴

The negotiations which led to the admission of the Jews have never been fully elucidated. In 1655, a conference was summoned by Cromwell, consisting of statesmen, lawyers, men of business and men of religion. The religious interest was strongest, and it was obvious that the conference had been packed with the object of securing a favourable decision. From a legal point of view, it was decided that there was no obstacle in the way of the Jews' return, but, when the question of commercial privileges was raised, there was a storm of opposition, headed by Sir Christopher Packe. A contemporary account of the conference records that "the merchants said such an inlet would be to enrich foreigners and impoverish English merchants. (Merchants especially had caused the Jews' departure from England . . .)" But, on the other hand, some representatives were of opinion that, seeing the Jews were merchants and financiers rather than farmers and manufacturers, they would serve to increase the volume of trade without ousting Englishmen from their occupations. The opposition of the merchants found vent in a proposal that the Jews should be admitted only to decayed ports and cities, where they might enjoy legal and religious privileges, but without trading rights. Such a proposal accorded ill with the interests of Cromwell or his protégés. According to the contemporary account of the meeting, "many Jewish merchants had come from beyond seas to London, and hoped they might have enjoyed as much privilege here in respect of trading, . . . as they enjoy in

Holland.”³⁰⁵ Cromwell seems to have become convinced that a back-door settlement was the only practical policy. He dissolved the conference, and left it to the irrepressible race to take advantage of the qualified welcome extended to them. His confidence was fully justified. It is clear that men resigned themselves to their *de facto* readmission, for John Evelyn notes in his *Diary* for 14th December, 1655, “now were the Jews admitted.”³⁰⁶ Numerous petitions against them were presented to Charles II by the City,³⁰⁷ but, nevertheless, by the end of the century, the Stock Exchange was full of Jews, who had an important effect on the development of its organization.³⁰⁸

During the Interregnum, industry and trade were in a state of transition. It is possible that the negative aspects of industrial development—the overthrow of monopolies, the depression of trade and the breakdown of regulation—were more important than the constructive achievements of the time, for, by discrediting traditional forms of organization and control, they prepared the way for the new commercial and financial developments of the Restoration period. But it would be untrue to dismiss all attempts at reconstruction as insignificant. The Act of 1650 anticipated the Restoration Council of Trade, while the encouragement of Protestant immigrants paved the way for the influx of Huguenots which followed the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, and the readmission of the Jews had an important, though incalculable, influence on the financial and commercial history of the time. In the sphere of unfulfilled projects, the movement for the establishment of a Bank anticipated the practice, and that for lower customs duties and free ports foreshadowed the theory of the latter years of the century.

CHAPTER V

THE DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT IN THE GILDS AND CITY GOVERNMENT

“If an Arbitrary government be so destructive in the Commonwealth, surely it is equally as dangerous to suffer it in the City.”

J. Bellamie, *Lysimachus Enervatus*, 1645.

(I) THE GILDS

It would be impossible to consider the development of industry without reference to the position of the craft guilds, which still exercised a fairly effective control over industrial life. It may be that, as is sometimes suggested, the guilds were originally democratic bodies, in which everyone had a reasonable chance of rising to the position of master craftsman and taking an active share in the government of his craft. But, when expanding markets and improved methods of production gave rise to a more complicated type of industry, the small master craftsman was gradually displaced by the capitalist trader and manufacturer on the one hand, and by the mere journeyman on the other. The rules of the crafts indicate that members had always been reluctant to meet the obligations imposed on them, and thus, when changed economic conditions necessitated some concentration of power, there was little difficulty in transforming the Guild into the Livery Company.

The most important element in the Livery Company was the Court of Assistants, It was usually composed of the former Masters and Wardens, who held office for life, and filled up their vacancies by co-optation, and the control both of administration and elections became gradually centred in its hands. The Court held regular weekly or fortnightly meetings, at which it dealt with particular cases and made general regulations for the conduct of trade, and, in conjunction with the Master and Wardens, named the freemen who were to be placed on the Livery.

The natural corollary to the Court of Assistants was the Yeomanry organization. Mr. Unwin has pointed out that the exact meaning of “yeomanry” varies from time to

time, and, whereas in the early fifteenth century it had signified an association of rebellious journeymen, by the end of the century it had come to mean a subordinate branch of the Livery Company. By the latter half of the sixteenth century, these Yeomanry organizations were by no means representative of the journeyman class alone. The status of "yeoman" had become a stage through which all members were forced to pass, and the yeomanry was now composed of two main elements—those who regarded it merely as a stepping-stone to higher office, and those who were destined by lack of fortune or family to remain for ever in the same position. The latter element constituted the permanent, though less powerful, section of the organization, while the former class monopolized the most important offices, and contributed largely to the expenses incurred on special occasions. Thus, from the journeyman's point of view, the Yeomanry organization in the seventeenth century was far from being a completely satisfactory solution of the problems which had been aggravated by the rise of modern industry.

These problems were not confined to the internal government of the crafts. Just as power had become concentrated in the hands of the strongest body within the company, so the richer, trading companies had gradually attained an ascendancy over the smaller industrial crafts. For instance, in the clothing trade, the Weavers, Dyers, Fullers, and Shearmen were dominated by the Drapers, who acted as employers and middlemen.

During the early Stuart period two main developments were taking place within the gilds, both of which have been described by Unwin. The first was an attempt to bring all men who practised the same craft under the control of the same gild, and the second was an attempt on the part of the subordinate crafts and the small masters to obtain separate incorporation. Fortunately for the success of this latter development, the Crown's financial necessities made possible an alliance between the Government and the small craftsman. Thus, the Feltmakers were freed from the control of the Haberdashers, the Apothecaries from the Grocers, and the Glovers from the Leathersellers. Sometimes the King became an employer himself, for in the Privy Council register for 18th March, 1640, there is the copy of an indenture whereby he agreed to provide the Pinmakers with wire, to supply them with capital, and to furnish a Hall.¹

With the outbreak of war, an abrupt stop was put to some of the existing methods of dealing with industrial problems. Monopoly of every kind was severely criticized, and the line between incorporation and monopoly was very narrow. The excise fitted into the financial gap caused by the abolition of monopolies, and the Government was no longer drawn to the small master by bonds of mutual interest. Within the companies themselves, there was reason for dissatisfaction with the results of separate incorporation, for organizations which had been set up to defend the small master against one kind of capitalist became the means of subjecting him to another. The Feltmakers' Company had originated in an attempt of the less prosperous feltmakers to free themselves from dependence on the Haberdashers, yet in 1650 the Haberdashers' Council claimed the support of the poor Feltmakers on the grounds that "the Company of Feltmakers look not at all to the preservation of their poorer members". The very success of the new incorporations had resulted in failure to achieve their original ends, for, as the small masters became prosperous capitalists, their journeymen became a distinct class with separate interests.²

The outlet through which the discontent of the journeymen manifested itself was determined by the political and religious background of the time. During the Interregnum, the seeds of modern democracy, which had lain buried for over a century, bore premature fruit in the social no less than in the political field. It is not surprising that the London Gilds should have been the scene of a widespread attempt to translate democratic theories into practice.³ The unorthodox Puritanism of the Sects was rife among the lower orders in London, and T. Edwards declared truly that theological heresies were fostering social discontent. He reported that there were numerous instances "of Mechanicks taking upon them to preach and baptize, as Smiths, Taylors, Shoemakers, Pedlers, and Weavers . . ." and respectable citizens complained of the unsettling effects on their servants' morals of Anabaptist teaching.⁴ John Lilburne never failed to rouse the enthusiasm of a London crowd by his spectacular, if somewhat monotonous, martyrdoms, and the pamphlet which caused his prosecution for high treason by the Council of State was called *An Outcry of the Young Men and Apprentices of London*.⁵ Revolutionary doctrines flourish best among men who have known starvation but have not lost the vigour to resent it, and the industrial depression

of 1640-50 was also a period during which the lower ranks of the City exercised considerable influence. Those apprentices who, on the occasion of the debate on the Militia Order, "came into the house of commons and kept the door open, and their hats on . . . and called out as they stood 'Vote, vote', and in this arrogant posture stood till the votes passed,"⁶ could not be expected to remain unchanged by their brief hour of glorious life.

The democratic movement in the guilds of the Commonwealth was different in two important respects from those agitations which had preceded it. In the first place, it seems to have been inspired by general democratic principles. Discontent with particular aspects of their lot was no new thing among the lower ranks of the guilds, but now there was formulated an attack on the whole system of oligarchical government which had laid its grip on the City of London and its Companies. In 1646, Parliament received a petition from "divers young men and apprentices" of the City, who pointed out that, since they had risked their lives for their country, they had a right to be heard. They went on to describe how, when they were made freemen of the City, they were enjoined by oath to maintain its liberties and privileges, "which notwithstanding we are disabled to do, by the intercession of divers illegal and undue customes, and Monoppolies . . . crept in to the diminution of the ancient Liberties of this famous City . . ." ⁷ A general complaint against the government of the City and its Companies stated that, of late, the Master, Wardens, and Liverymen of all the London companies had been unjustly chosen, "for by the Charters of the Companies the Master, Wardens, and Liverymen are to be chosen by the commonalty of the said Company; contrary thereunto of late years, twelve and fifteen men of the said Company have made Orders and Ordinances in the name of the commonalty . . ." ⁸ During the Interregnum, a definite agitation on the part of the commonalty took place in at least twelve London Companies, and, apart from other evidence, this large number of almost simultaneous upheavals points to the influence of general democratic theories rather than to particular discontents. In another respect, the Interregnum agitation differed from earlier movements of a similar nature. Especially in the case of the Merchant Taylors and the Clothworkers, it is clear that the real revolutionaries were the industrial rank and file, rather than the accredited representatives of the

Yeomanry. The cleavage between wage-earners and employers was beginning to be clearly marked, and for this reason Mr. Unwin has seen in the movement the beginnings of modern Trade Unionism.⁹

Three out of the twelve Companies who were troubled by the democratic ferment were the wealthy, commercial bodies of the Goldsmiths, the Clothworkers, and the Merchant Taylors. The agitation in the Goldsmiths' Company is the more remarkable when its great wealth and important position are considered. In this Company of all others, it might be thought that the voice of the small, industrial element would be lost amid the clamour of great financial interests, yet the Goldsmiths' records indicate a determined attempt on the part of the "generality" to win some part in the government of their craft. The democratic movements in the gilds and the City cannot have failed to react upon each other. In 1650, when the Goldsmiths' Court of Assistants read a copy of the petition, presented to the Common Council of the City by the Wardens of the twelve great Companies, for continuing the Lord Mayor's election by the Liveries, the interests of the generality were brought up for the first time. The committee of the Common Council to whom the petition was presented had objected that no mention was made therein of the Yeomanry and generality, and remarked that before their next meeting they would expect the various Companies to consult their Yeomanries and generalities, as well as their Liveries. The Goldsmiths therefore resolved that their generality should be consulted.¹⁰ Two days later, the petition was referred to the whole body for approbation, and the Clerk was asked to read it. It was, however, opposed by three members, who caused some disturbance by asking "divers impertinent questions . . . unsuitable to the occasion of their meeting". Despite this unseemly behaviour, the Clerk read out the petition, and those who approved of it were told to hold up their hands. One or two of the generality opposed it, but finally it was carried almost unanimously. It is noticeable that the support of the rank and file was considered important, for the records state that, "it is to bee remembered that divers of the Generality present did affirme to the Clerke that, if need were, they would personally appeare before the Committee of Common Councell in confirmacion of this daye's proceeding . . ." ¹¹

This demonstration of their importance seems to have

encouraged the commonalty to criticize the government of their Company. Criticism began with expression of the common desire to see the charter and records, and in June, 1651, it was ordered that, if time permitted, the charter should be read at the next Court of Assistants, together with the ancient orders for the appointment of that Court.¹² Nothing further was done for the present, but in May, 1652, at a Court held on quarter day, it was recalled that the generality had demanded that the charter should be read to them, and agreed that the reading should take place that afternoon, after the names of the newly-elected Wardens had been published and the draft of a petition read. Everything was being carried out according to plan, when some of the generality protested that the business before the Court should have been the election of wardens and not the reading of the petition. Though they would bring no specific charges against the recently elected Wardens, they stood firm in their demand for a popular choice. Thereupon, the Wardens, Assistants, and Livery took refuge in the simple expedient of departing from the Hall, "leaving the Renters to serve the generalitie with Buns, cakes and cheese," apparently in the hope that a good meal would stifle further discussion.¹³ But after they had gone, startling developments took place, and a few days later a Court was held specially to consider the best course to pursue with regard to the "pretended election" of Wardens, which had taken place after the Wardens, Assistants, and Livery had left the Hall. This revolutionary act was said to be the work of a few turbulent spirits, members both of the Goldsmiths' and of other companies, who were generally opposed to good government and order. The Court first decided that, "during the time of this disturbance of the government of this companye," the "pounson" of the Lion and Leopard's head should be locked up in the treasury safe from illegitimate use, but the engraver of the "pounsons" objected to this proposal on the grounds that he had made them and could do as he liked with them, and he would only promise not to use them without the Wardens' consent. After this, four of the Livery, together with various other members of the Company, came into the Hall, and their spokesman complained bitterly of the "undue and irregular proceedings" which had led up to the election of Wardens by the commonalty, "which they humbly conceave to bee against the rules of the good government of the Corporacion, and if not timely prevented

may tend to the utter ruine and subversion thereof," They prayed the Court to go on with its business according to established precedent, and assured them that the majority of the commonalty would support them in this.¹⁴

In December, 1652, the Parliamentary Committee appointed for the Trial of Petitions read a petition from the freemen of the Goldsmiths' Company, which set forth the grievances of the commonalty and described the way in which the whole government of the Company had been usurped by the Wardens and Assistants.¹⁵ The document went on to describe the events of a year ago, when the commonalty had succeeded in obtaining a knowledge of their charter which had hitherto been kept from them. They had then claimed to exercise their right to elect Wardens, and when the "ancients" told them that the choice had already been made, and rose up to leave the Hall, they proceeded to carry out the election on their own account, first declaring null and void all the bye-laws and votes which had been made, contrary to the charter, on the subject of elections. Now several men "under the name of Wardens", kept possession of the Books of Hall and the records, so that the persons whom the commonalty had appointed to the aforesaid office could not discharge their duties. The petitioners prayed that Parliament would return them their just rights and privileges, "for the which they have cheerfully with the hazard of their lives and fortunes engaged for the preservacion of the Commonwealth." The Parliamentary Committee ordered that the Wardens and Assistants and other persons against whom complaints had been brought should have a copy of the petition and a month in which to answer it. The Court of Assistants read this order and a copy of the petition, and, after "a mature debate concerning the same", they ordered that a committee of Wardens and Assistants should be appointed to prepare an answer as soon as possible.¹⁶

A week or two later, the Court considered the draft of an answer to Parliament, "with the preamble thereof relating to the greate trust reposed in the Company by the State."¹⁷ It seems probable that this judicious reminder of the Government's indebtedness to the Goldsmiths turned the scales in favour of the oligarchy, for towards the end of January, 1653, the Wardens and Assistants who had been deputed to face the Parliamentary committee reported their success to the Court. They had told the committee that,

since the business was so complicated and important, they had not been able to prepare a written answer, but would give a verbal one instead. "Upon which after long Debate," it was resolved that the freemen's petition, "and the whole matter thereupon," should be dismissed.¹⁸ This decision seems to have effectually quenched the ardour of the democratic party. Nothing more is heard of their demands, and a young member, who was accused a few days later of speaking disrespectfully of the oligarchy's capacity for absorbing large fines, admitted that in the heat of the debate on the Parliamentary inquiry he might have spoken rashly, but was now willing to retract every word he had said.¹⁹

The distinguishing feature of the democratic movement in the Clothworkers' Company is the way in which industrial troubles led to criticism of its constitution. In view of the serious depression of the clothing trade which followed in the wake of the Civil Wars,²⁰ it is not surprising to find the Wardens of the Yeomanry in March, 1641, presenting the draft of an Act for relief of the artisan clothworkers, which they claimed to have grounded upon a statute of Edward VI. The Court of Assistants decided that the petition should be put forward in the name of the whole Company, and a committee was appointed to assist the Yeomanry in presenting it to Parliament.²¹ It is interesting to trace the gradual transition from industrial to constitutional troubles, for when in November, 1641, some of the "Batchelors" and other members of the Yeomanry petitioned the Court to support the clothiers in their suit to Parliament, the Assistants remarked coldly "that they did not approve of their proceedinge therein". Nevertheless, they gave permission to the Batchelors of the Yeomanry to elect a committee of six or eight men from among their number, "that may consider of such thinge for the goode of the handicrafte of the Company as may be fitt for the parliament to graunte, and to present them to this board and thereupon such further consideracion shall be had thereof by this board as shall be thought meete."²²

A few days later, the names of the Yeomanry's committee were published,²³ and in December, 1641, they presented their propositions to the Court. Their chief desires were that gig mills should be suppressed, that all who used the trade of clothworkers in London should be brought under one corporation, and that no wool should be transported. Finally, they asked to see copies of the old and new charters,

and the Books of Hall ordinances, so that men might know to what rules they were expected to conform.²⁴ The depression of the clothing trade continued, and in 1645 the Wardens and other members of the Yeomanry came into the Court to crave its assistance "both in purse and person to ye petitions which they had delivered to ye parliament for obteyninge of worke for ye handycraft of this Company". It was resolved that the Court should give its assistance in every possible way, and that the Yeomanry were to choose six of their number to join with six of the Assistants to consider the business.²⁵

By the beginning of 1648, it was apparent that the hint of discord between the Yeomanry and the Assistants had become a certainty. The Court minutes for 18th January state that certain propositions were read, which the Wardens and others of the Yeomanry had presented at the last Court. It was decided, after some debate, that six of the Court of Assistants were to join with six of the Yeomanry to debate the matters in dispute. Then follows a list of the Yeomanry's representatives, and two of the names—Hubberstey and Whaley—coincide with those chosen for the former committee appointed to investigate industrial grievances.²⁶ At the first meeting of the committee, it became clear that the points in dispute between the Assistants and Yeomanry could not be settled without a struggle, "the matter in question beinge whether the Eleccion of the Master, Wardens, and other Officers were not in the Master, Wardens, and Commonalty accordinge to the letter of the Charter." The "Case of Corporations", as cited by Coke, was quoted to prove that elections by a select number of men were valid according to law, and thereupon the Yeomanry's representatives retired to consult their counsel.²⁷ A week later, they presented the opinion of two legal advisers that the election of the Master, Wardens, and all other officers was vested in the whole body of the Company, including the commonalty,²⁸ and followed this up by a protest against the existing ordinances, declaring them "to be invalid and not further to bind them".²⁹

The Yeomanry's protest against the established government of their Company was read in the Court of Assistants on 25th February, in the presence of Hubberstey and Linerson, two of the Yeomanry's committee, "and they did avow and justifie the same and said they did not repent themselves of anythinge that they had done therein." After much debate,

the Court finally declared that they would refer the matter in dispute to the Lord Mayor, Court of Aldermen, and City Council.³⁰ In April, 1648, it was agreed by the Court that an answer should be drawn up to be delivered to the Yeomanry in reply to their propositions. Herein it was stated that the Company already had officers duly elected by virtue of their ordinances, "and that wee cannott nor will not give way to any such elleccion as they desire."³¹ Having taken a firm stand, the Court could afford to be magnanimous, and they declared that they were ready to suspend such ordinances as the Lord Mayor and Aldermen should think fit, until new regulations had been drawn up and confirmed.³²

Towards the end of 1648, the struggle entered upon a new stage, in which the banner of revolution was wrenched from the hands of the accredited representatives of the Yeomanry by the rank and file of the Company. On 18th December, the Yeomanry's Wardens and Assistants were called into Court, and told that the committee which they had nominated to work for the peace and unity of the Company now had the effrontery to demand that a Common Hall should be called to elect the Master and Wardens. The Yeomanry's officials declared flatly that "they were all against it", and that such a method of election was contrary to the long established laws of the Company.³³ Hitherto, the court of appeal for the contending factions had been the City government, but, now that the controversy had become more acute, the intervention of Parliament seems to have been sought and obtained. At the beginning of 1650, a committee of the Court of Assistants was appointed to take counsel's opinion as to "what course is fit to be taken for ye prevention of such act or order as some of ye Yeomanry of this Company doe now indeavor to gett and obteyne for ye rule and government of this Company at their wills and pleasures".³⁴ On 27th February and again on 15th March, the Master, Wardens, Assistants, and Livery, together with the officers of the Yeomanry, were ordered to come before a Parliamentary committee which was considering the government of the Company.³⁵ In April, the Yeomanry asked to have sight of a certain "black book", together with other books which concerned them, and the Court gave permission on condition that the books did not leave the Hall.³⁶

When the Autumn came, the struggle was still going on, and the Court adopted once more the expedient of trying to

arrive at a settlement by means of a joint committee of the Yeomanry and the Assistants, who were to decide if any of the commonalty's demands could be granted without breach of the Company's ordinances. Apparently no settlement was reached, for in December, when the proceedings before the Parliamentary committee were related by one of the Court's representatives, it was ordered that the defence of the Company's government was to be continued.³⁷ In January, 1651, a committee, consisting of the Master and Wardens, and the artisan clothworkers from among the Livery and Batchelors of the Yeomanry, was ordered to attend the Council for Advancement of Trade to reply to the accusations brought against the governors of the Company by the artisan clothworkers.³⁸ Again, in March, 1651, a committee was appointed to take the advice of counsel and consider what should be done to defend the Company's government "in answer to ye proposals of ye dissentinge Brethren of this Company by them exhibited to the Councell at Whitehall for advance of Trade . . ." ³⁹ At subsequent meetings of the Court, 23rd April was mentioned as the day on which the Council for Advance of Trade would hear the opinions of the rival parties.⁴⁰

In the October of 1651 the struggle came to an end. It was ordered by the Court that the "four perticuler requests" of the Yeomanry should be taken into consideration, and, with that object, a committee of five was appointed to join with an equal number of the Yeomanry to debate the matter.⁴¹ On 26th October the Yeomanry gained an ostensible triumph. The Court stated that, on reading the proposals of the Yeomanry's Wardens and Assistants, they were ready to agree that these officers might execute "the severall Acts and ordinances by them proposed for the good of the handy trade and ye poore of this Company". The provisions which follow do not seem to have been of a very revolutionary character. By their terms, the domestic business of the Yeomanry organization was handed over to the care of its officers. Thus, all quarteridge money and fines due from the Yeomanry were to be given to the Wardens and Assistants of that body, and cases of evasion of the rules were to be referred to their jurisdiction, though, in the event of a dispute, an appeal was to be made to the higher authority of the Master, Wardens, and Assistants of the Company. In addition, the Yeomanry were to have power to choose two officers, a Beadle and an Informer. Lastly, it was

stipulated that if any difference of opinion arose as to the scope and meaning of the above provisions, the matter was to be referred to the Court of Assistants.⁴² On 11th November this order was confirmed, "and at the Table delivered to the Assembly of the Yeomanry then present, who unanimously and connectively rendred their kinde acceptance and thankfullnes for the same."⁴³

Whether the Yeomanry were making the best of a bad job, or whether they were genuinely grateful for the concessions which were granted, it is hard to say. But there is no doubt that the contrast between what they had at one time demanded and what they actually received was very striking. At the height of their presumption, they had demanded universal suffrage and declared that the ordinances made by the present governors of the Company were invalid, and, in the end, they appear to have been content with a slight extension of their domestic jurisdiction. The Wardens and Assistants of the Yeomanry had, at one point, refused to endorse the demand made by the Yeomanry's committee for the calling of a Common Hall, and it is probable that the ultimate failure of the democratic agitation was due to this divergence of interest between the rank and file of the craft and the Yeomanry's officials, who were appointed by the Court of Assistants and would have little to gain by the overthrow of their authority.⁴⁴

At some point during the struggle, probably about 1650, there appeared a pamphlet, called the *Government of the Fullers, Shearmen and Clothworkers*, written by a member of the Court for the benefit of a committee, whose name he does not specify, but which was probably the Parliamentary committee entrusted with the task of composing the differences at issue between the two parties. The appeal to first principles was not confined to the democratic section of the London Companies, for the writer of this pamphlet begins by pointing out that the restriction of political power to a comparatively small number of men in any society is justified by the precedent of God's action in the Creation. "We doubt not," he says, "that God in the beginning did give a resemblance of Politicall power when the Light created on the first was on the fourth day contracted in these two great Rulers of the world." As God complained that the people no longer feared Him or His ordinances, so do the present Governors of the Company complain of "our dissenting brethen", who declare that

the rule of the Governors is a "combination and usurpation". The case for the existing method of government rests also on the more solid foundations of precedent and common sense. According to this writer, it was clear that, before the Clothworkers were incorporated, the Master, Wardens, and Assistants acted for the whole Company, and this custom continued after its incorporation. The support of common sense is added to the sanction of custom, for, since the charters make no mention of majority rule, government by the whole commonalty would lead to hopeless confusion. "If the diffusive Body be the Governours, who are to be governed?" asks the pamphleteer. "If they are to search, who are to be searched? If they are to punish, who are to be punished?" Elections, too, would become impossible if the consent of every member of the Company had to be obtained.⁴⁵

The history of the Merchant Taylors' Company shows plainly that, in this Company at least, the main line of cleavage was not between the Yeomanry officials and the senior oligarchy, but between the working handicraftsmen on the one hand and the employers on the other. In August, 1649, a petition from the working tailors was presented to the Court, complaining that "in our Company are many grievances lately crept in to the wrong of all mechanickall Taylors". They declared that "divers rich men of our trade by takeing over great multitudes of Apprentices doe weaken the poorer sort of us", that apprentices were bound at the Halls of other companies, and that excessive numbers of foreigners were admitted. They went on to ask that the Company's powers of search should be increased, that all work should be closely examined, and that informers should be regularly called to account. On 18th September, a committee of the Court of Assistants was held to debate the business with the petitioners. It was decided that to extend the Company's powers of search beyond the limits of the terms of their charter would be illegal, but most of the other industrial grievances were met with promises of redress.

As in the case of the Clothworkers, industrial grievances led to constitutional criticism. The working tailors intimated that "they perceaved an intencion in the Company to exclude the Taylors members of this Society from all office and place of auditt in the Company . . ." In order that this development might be checked, they desired that, "according to

auncient custome," two working tailors should be chosen as Wardens' Substitutes.⁴⁶ Six informers were to be added to the two already chosen to act against foreigners, and they asked that a sub-committee might be appointed for regulating the trade in general and directing informers in particular.⁴⁷ The Court referred these requests to the Wardens' Substitutes and their "Court of Sixteen Men", and in December, 1649, the Yeomanry's officials reported the decisions at which they had arrived at a Court held on 14th November. They were of opinion that no harm could be done by granting the working tailors' request for additional informers, provided that the Company was not put to any additional expense. As to the request for the appointment of a sub-committee, "this Court after much debate thereof with the Complainants, working Taylors, doth declare That they themselves the members of this Court are and anciently have been the Sub-committee of this Company . . ." In addition to being unnecessary, the request was dangerous, for to allow the working tailors to appoint a sub-committee from among themselves, "is altogether inconvenient and inconsistent with the auncient and good government of this Company, and tending to such an innovacion as may prove of dangerous consequence to this Society in time to come."

The senior oligarchy of the Company was not as tender towards the Yeomanry's privileges as the latter might have desired. After debate with some of the working tailors who were present, it was decided to add six extra informers, during the Company's pleasure. Then, after a further debate, the Court announced that in future two "cutting tailors" should be chosen each year as Wardens' Substitutes, and that ten cutting tailors should join with the Wardens' Substitutes and Sixteen Men to act as a sub-committee for calling informers to account and investigating abuses. When the Court of Assistants proceeded to choose the sub-committee it became apparent that they, no less than the Yeomanry's officials, must protect themselves against the demands of the working tailors. After the nomination had taken place, the petitioners were called in and acquainted with the result, and thereupon "premtorily insisted upon it to have the sole nominacion of the persons to be the Sub-committee denying to agree to any Committee nominated by this Court. Notwithstanding, this Court conceiving it to bee of very ill consequence to give them any such power", resolved to adhere firmly to their former procedure, though

they conceded to the working tailors the right of criticizing particular nominations.⁴⁸

Later in December, another Court was held to which representatives of the "cutting tailors" came in a chastened mood. They made various requests concerning the administration of the Company, including the provision that the time and manner of meeting of the sub-committee should be definitely fixed. Then "some of them in the name of the rest, declared their Sorrow for what rash and foolish expressions were used by some of them here the last Court, Declaring further that they would abide and submit unto the order of this Court for their regulacion and government . . ." This proper expression of humility did not go unrewarded, for the Court removed four of the sub-committee to whom the working tailors objected, and fixed definite times of meeting for this committee until the following midsummer.⁴⁹ The newly-appointed body carried on a vigorous campaign against foreign workmen,⁵⁰ but found little favour with the Court of Assistants. In August, 1651, it was prolonged until the following midsummer with obvious reluctance, the Court stating that the results of its work had not been commensurate with the expenses entailed.⁵¹ A similar grudging renewal took place in August, 1653,⁵² but the Court's desire to humour the "cutting tailors" had now vanished, and a year later their representatives were dismissed with the reminder that they "were creatures of the Court of Assistants own making, and no part of their constitution in any grant or charter".⁵³

Though the history of the Goldsmiths, Clothworkers, and Merchant Taylors shows that the democratic movement was not confined to the smaller handicraft guilds, it is among these bodies that the most numerous instances of agitation occur. Whereas the rank and file of the big companies were only comparatively badly-off, the journeymen in the smaller guilds were rapidly degenerating into mere labourers. Under the Commonwealth, they made a widespread attempt to obtain a share in the government of their trades, which would enable them to escape from the servitude which was gradually fastening upon them.

The records of the Saddlers' Company contain only the barest indication of the agitation which was taking place in the Company. In 1646, they state that the Livery appeared at the Court of Assistants without summons, and expressed their desire, "which was . . . to joyne with them in the

elleccion of wardens which the Court denied.”⁵⁴ A full account of the movements of the democratic party appears in a pamphlet published in 1652. In the September of that year, Parliament set up a committee to consider the remodelling of corporations in accordance with the new principles of political government then in force,⁵⁵ and in October four freemen saddlers presented a petition to this committee. They declared that they were speaking “as well on our own behalf, as on behalf of all the rest of our brethren, working Saddlers, the commonalty thereof, and the Citizens of London of the same mystery or art”. They reminded the committee that it had pleased God to free England from the Norman yoke by means of Parliament’s happy success, “and therefore of late in their wisdoms, they have appointed this honourable Committee for the regulating of Corporations set up and ordained originally by the late Tyrannical King and his Progenitors ever since King William I invaded and subdued this Nation.” Under cover of their iniquitous charter, the Wardens have imposed a tyrannical system of government upon the freemen of the Company, ruling it entirely through a Master and Wardens, and exacting great sums of money for quarteridge and other charges. It seems likely that there had been some trouble with regard to the application of the apprenticeship laws to men who had served in the wars, for it was stated that, “for no other cause, but for that your Petitioners, some of them, have served the Parliament from the beginning in Wars and otherwise, they deny your Petitioners the common priviledge due unto them, as freemen of the said Mystery and Commonalty.” The freemen prayed that the Company’s charter, account books and books of orders, which were kept at Saddlers’ Hall by the Master and Wardens, might be seized and brought before the Parliamentary committee. They also asked to be allowed to draw up a new charter, “such as may best agree and consist with the present State Government and constitution thereof, in opposition to Monarchical and Kingly government.”

This petition was read on 21st October, and resulted in three orders being made by the Parliamentary committee. The freemen were told to present their petition to Parliament on 4th November, on which day the Master and Wardens would appear to answer the same, bringing with them the Company’s charter and the account and order books. These orders were served on the Master and Wardens on 29th

October, "vulgarly called the Lord Mayor's day, when Monarchy was in power; . . . but it was before dinner, having been upon the water; and they were sober, the Messenger said . . ." Though the oligarchy may have received the petition in a sober frame of mind, they did not take it to heart. The freemen Saddlers record that they neglected the orders, and that thereupon it became necessary to send another petition to the Committee for Corporations, praying it to continue its activities. It was ordered that the hearing of the freemen's case should be deferred until 2nd December, but the Master and Wardens managed to secure yet another delay. Thereupon, one of the freemen, Captain Nathaniel Burt, wrote to the chairman of the Parliamentary committee. He began by attacking the City of London, "who abound in oppression and destroy or divide the Commonalty," and then directed his wrath against all mercenary lawyers. A letter "to all free-born Englishmen" followed, urging them to recover their right to choose the officers of their companies and other corporations, a right which they undoubtedly possessed if they were liable to pay taxes. If this course is followed, says Captain Burt, public life will be improved, "and in time it may be a means to promote truth and righteousness, by breaking of combinations and factions in Guildhalls, Corporations, and Fraternities, Common Councils, Assistants, and Committees, who are cemented usually by Oaths of Secrecie or strong promise of Confederacie." ⁵⁶ With this appeal, the records of the freemen's agitation come to an end.

In 1656, a conflict was in progress between the freemen and Assistants of the Clockmakers' Company. The freemen presented a petition to the Lord Mayor, telling him how their Company had obtained a charter from the King about twenty-five years ago in the hope that it would enable them to regulate and improve their trade. But instead, they were in a worse condition than before the charter was granted, for whereas they had formerly been able to seek redress from the Parliament or the City Government, now they were at the mercy of the Court of Assistants. Large sums of money were exacted from the members for no good purpose, and, although the charter was procured largely with the object of restraining foreigners and strangers from using the trade, the Assistants not only countenanced them but lent them active support. As a result, foreigners had risen to positions of trust within the Company, from which they were able to

rule over freeborn Englishmen. A third grievance was the excessive number of apprentices which had been admitted into the trade. "And that these abuses might be without remedy when from time to time complaints have bin made by severall of ye Company, as if they were conscious of their guilt, instead of reforming they have presently taken into ye Assistants the most active of such complayners and soe ye complaynt ceased."

At last, several apprentices, goaded to desperation, and "fearing that the end of their services would be the beginning of beggary", sent a petition to the late Lord Mayor. A meeting was called between the freemen and the Master and Wardens at Rose Tavern, and, after various suggestions had been made, it was finally agreed that two of the freemen should attend every Court to see that their orders were executed. When the commonalty's representatives attended the first Court, they were rudely received, and told that "the Company needed noe Supervisors", and the Court proceeded to annul the orders made at Rose Tavern. A further attempt to persuade the Court to take some action against foreign intruders met with no better success, and therefore, considering their misfortunes and the enlightened character of the present Lord Mayor, the freemen stated that they had decided to present their grievances to him. Fourteen other freemen, however, presented a counter-petition to the Lord Mayor, denying the allegations which their fellows had made, and declaring that the democratic element in the Company had attempted to bring about greater innovations than they had allowed to appear in their petition. They had "pressed to have the eleccion of Maister, Wardens, and Assistants among themselves, or soe many to be joined to the Assistants as might equalize them in number, which is contrary to the true intent and meaning of the Charter, and thereby would make a final distruccon of the whole Company".

A supplementary petition of the revolutionary freemen seems to indicate that there was some truth in the accusation made by their opponents that they were not so moderate in their demands as might appear in the first instance. In this petition, they recited once more the economic greivances which followed from an oligarchical control, and then proposed that all members of the Company should have a voice in choosing the Master, Wardens, and Assistants, and that these officers should "governe the Company

according to the orders in being, and that no alteration be made by making new orders without the consent of such who shall have power to chuse the Officers of the Company". The freemen besought the Lord Mayor to take their grievances seriously, insisting that they were the expostulations of "a poor, expiring society".⁵⁷

While the Clockmakers based their opposition to oligarchical government mainly on practical grounds, the commonalty of the Founders read their betters a lecture on the constitution. The commonalty protested that they had been falsely accused of plotting the confusion and overthrow of the Company, whereas, in fact, they were extremely tender of its reputation, wishing only to return to "our primitive rights and privileges and this we know is justifiable by the law of God, of Nature, and of Nations. . . . Therefore, seeing that men in all ages have, through their supine carelessness, degenerated from the righteousness of their first principles and if your ancestors have been guilty of anything of this nature, we entreat that it may be your sorrow and not your sin . . ." The commonalty begged that the charter might be read to them, and, under cover of this request, went on to make "many unseemly speeches", in which they claimed to have equal power with the Court of Assistants in the government of the Company.⁵⁸

The agitation in the Printers' Company is chiefly interesting for the statements made by the working printers as to the change in their economic status. The "poor freemen and journeymen printers" told the House of Commons how the King had incorporated them, and endowed them with a charter, which was intended for the general good of the whole Company. Latterly, the master printers have so perverted the charter from its original use that its benefits have been confined to themselves alone. According to the laws of England, any man who has served his apprenticeship may set up in trade for himself, but economic facts are proving tougher than law, and now the petitioners are made "perpetuall bondmen to serve some few of the rich all their lives upon such condicions and for such hire, and at such times, as the Masters think fit ; for their trade of Printing (but as servants) they must not use, so as they take all possibilitie of Advancement (be they never so exquisite in their qualitie) from the petitioners, and make them incapable of maintenance for them, their wives and posterities." Another way in which the Masters oppress the lesser printers is by keeping large

numbers of apprentices ("who after their Apprenticeships like the petitioners become for ever more servile than before"), and giving to them all the work which ought to be distributed among the main body of the printers. All this oppression has not even had the virtue of cheapening the goods to the consumer, for prices have gone up, the paper is worse, and the print dim. The Stationers are the worst offenders, having made an agreement that they will retail no new copies except their own, by which means they have confined to themselves all profits, both from printing and book selling.⁵⁹

A petition from the "masters and workmen printers" declared that the Stationers' Company, "by what power we know not," had changed the whole character of its government since its original charter had been granted. There had been introduced officers known as Assistants, who, together with the Master and Wardens, had usurped the entire government of the printing trade. Their administration was not only oligarchical, but ill-informed, for they were mere "booke-sellers and strangers to the said Mystery". The petitioners begged that they might have power to regulate their trade themselves.⁶⁰ Again, in 1659, the workmen printers asked Parliament to redress the grievances which had arisen from the monopoly of Bible printing in two men's hands, "whereby they themselves employ not above ten or twelve persons in their service and inhance the prices of their Books to excessive dear rates."⁶¹

The Carpenters' records contain clear indications of a democratic agitation, but do not give a full account of the points at issue. In August, 1654, after a new Master and Wardens had been elected, the Master was informed that printed tickets had been circulated by Mr. Richard Dennet, one of the Livery, urging that now was the time to elect the Clerk and Beadle. This officious Liveryman stated in his manifesto that he thought it his duty "to prevent future differences among us concerninge the election of the officers of our Companye's service", and had therefore procured copies of the Company's charter, and taken legal advice upon them. As a result of these activities, it had been resolved "by all" that the Assistants alone, without the commonalty, had no more power to choose a Beadle than they had to choose a Master and Wardens. It was resolved that, when the Company met to elect the Master and Wardens, they should then proceed to elect any other officers whom they

thought fit, and that an election carried out in any other way was null and void. The Master and Wardens disapproved strongly of this manifesto, "and likewise an officer came from my lord maior to the Master and Wardens to request them that they should not suffer any such innovacion to be at all in their Company." The Court of Assistants took legal opinion, and obtained the decision, based on ancient precedents, that the Clerk and Beadle should not be elected by the commonalty. They added, "It is most certeine that if this kind of Innovacion should be admitted, it would breed great disturbances and unquietnes in the Companies of London, to the greate prejudice both of the Companies and Citty." ⁶²

The unrest, which was in this case initiated by a Liveryman, soon filtered down to the lower ranks of the Company. Already in 1640, an ordinary member had "affronted the whole Company in this Court, saying it was noe Court and that they took bribes by the name of fynes".⁶³ Seven years later, mere abuse had crystallized into definite criticism. When Mr. Evans, one of the commonalty, was summoned by the Beadle to pay his fine, he replied that he would defer payment until he and five more of the Company had been allowed to view its charter. The Court now ordered that the charter should be delivered to the Master, Wardens, and five Assistants, who were empowered to show it, "or soe much thereof as they shall think fitting," to the said Mr. Evans and five other members of the commonalty.⁶⁴

Whether Mr. Evans and his friends were able to obtain this carefully edited view of the Company's charter is not certain, but, in any case, their dissatisfaction with the Company's government seems to have spread to others. In August, 1650, the Master and two other members of the Court were told to meet together in accordance with an order from the Lord Mayor, and attempt to reconcile the differences between the Livery and commonalty. The attempt could not have been successful, for, in the following January, the Court ordered that all the matters in dispute between themselves and the commonalty should be referred to the determination of three of the Assistants, two of the Livery and one of the Yeomanry, and, in case this body should come to no agreement, the final decision was to rest with the Lord Mayor and Court of Aldermen.⁶⁵ But although these entries show that there was a fairly serious upheaval

in the Company, there are no details of the matters in dispute or of the decision of the arbitrators.

The history of the agitation in the Weavers' Company is unusually interesting, partly because the commonalty combined a theory of abstract right with a good deal of practical initiative, and partly because Parliament was so much impressed with the righteousness of their cause that it passed an Act in their favour. In May, 1647, the Commons received a petition from the commonalty of the Weavers of London, which was referred to a committee consisting of the knights and burgesses from Norfolk and Suffolk. They were ordered to meet continually to receive petitions from weavers in all parts of the country, and were authorized to send for patents, account books, and other papers necessary to their investigation.⁶⁶ This entry seems to suggest that one reason for Parliament's support of the commonalty of the London Weavers was its eagerness to adopt any expedient which might bring about a revival in the clothing trade.

During July, 1648, the Common Council of the City received a petition from the Bailiffs, Wardens, Assistants, and Livery of the Weavers' Company, complaining that the generality had interrupted the Assistants and Livery in their "ancient manner of Election", which had been in use for five hundred years. "Apprehending this cause to be a matter of very great consequence to the government of the City and all Companies within it," the Council decided to lay their case before the House of Commons. They appointed a committee to explain to them "the ill consequences and dangers that may ensue by that interuption and disturbance to the auncient and laudable government of this Cittie and all the Companies within the same. And humbly to pray that some speedy course may be taken to stopp such disorders and proceedings of the generality".⁶⁷ In answer to this petition, the Commons ordered that the freemen of the Weavers' Company should not assemble at their Hall or at any other place "in these unquiet Times" to question the ancient method of electing the governors of the Company, this matter being under consideration by a Committee of Parliament.⁶⁸

Three days after this order had been made, the House was told that some of the Weavers' Company were at the door. They were called in, and read a petition entitled "the humble petition of the Commonalty of the Company

of Weavers, London". Mr. Speaker informed them that, after hearing this document, the House was willing to take off the order previously made, and "do expect you manage the Election peaceably, and in good Order; and proceed therein according to Law".⁶⁹ The significance of this pronouncement appears in a pamphlet which was published subsequently by the commonalty of the Weavers. They record how, on the day when the Master and Wardens were to be elected, the commonalty chose 140 of their number to represent the whole, "which number being presented to the Honourable House of Commons, upon the 22nd of July, 1648, and by them not only approved of, but an Order likewise granted us to manage our Election peaceably according to Law, which had been done accordingly, had not the said Governours forcibly kept us out of our Hall, and contemned the Orders of this Honourable House."⁷⁰ On 30th July, the commonalty of the Weavers appeared once more, and presented a petition, which the House ordered to be referred to a committee who were to see that speedy justice was done. Mr. Speaker told the petitioners that the House was impressed by their "civil and fair Carriage Here, as at the Election; and commend you for it".⁷¹

A few days later, the Bailiffs, Wardens, Assistants, and Livery of the Weavers' Company presented a counter-petition to the Commons, which was referred to the committee appointed to consider and, if possible, settle the Weavers' business.⁷² Since the Commons appeared to be on the side of the commonalty, those who supported the established order decided to appeal to the Upper House. The Common Council of the City told the Lords that they had lately received a petition from the governors of the Weavers' Company, describing the "tumultous and irregular Proceedings of some of the Commonalty of the said Company". Such happenings, say the Common Council, should be firmly repressed, lest they encourage others to criticize established government, "which by the inferior sort of People is much aimed at, and endeavoured to be practised, in these distracted Times." The petitioners pray the Lords to protect the ancient customs, privileges, and usages of the City and its Companies, "so that a Declaration may be made, and some speedy Course taken, for the Prevention of such Disorders and undue Proceedings, by any Member of this or any other Company for the future."⁷³

The records of the Weavers' Company are not very full

for the year 1648, and there is no account in them of the agitation which took place during the summer of that year. But, in October, the Court of Assistants stated that "whereas some members of this Companie (ill-affected to Government) have made a combination, and have practised to overthrow ye Antient approved Government of this Companie," they had decided to defend their privileges, even at the risk of great expense. In order to meet the costs of this defence, they made an assessment of ten shillings on each of the Assistants and Livery, "for the preservation and supportation of this Companie and the Government thereof from Ruine and destruction."⁷⁴

The rival claims of the commonalty and the governing body of the Weavers were printed in two pamphlets. The *Case of the Commonalty of the Corporation of the Weavers* opens in a style worthy of an eighteenth century *philosophe*. "All Legall Jurisdictions over a number of people or society of men must either be primitive or derivative, now primitive jurisdiction is undoubtedly in the whole body and not in three or more members, all men being by nature equall to other, and all jurisdictive power over them being founded by a compact or agreement with them, is invested in one or more persons who represent the whole, and by consent of the whole are empowered to govern by such Rules of equality towards all, as that both governours and governed may know certainly what the one may command and what the other must obey; without the performance of which mutuall contract, all obligations are cancelled, and that jurisdictive power returns unto its first spring (the people) from whence it was conveyed." The main support on which the usurpers base their power is the charter of Henry II, but this charter was granted to the whole society, and not to any one section of it.

"Custom" is often cited by the governors as if it excused all and explained all, but, in order to be valid, it must comply with certain conditions. Usage and time are indispensable, "yet that time must be such whereof there is no memory of man, and the usage must be peaceable without interruption," and in the present case neither of the conditions is fulfilled. Moreover, custom which has originated in force has no right to continued existence, and the customs upheld by the oligarchy of the Weavers are clearly contrary to Act of Parliament, which ordains that all elections should be free. Lastly, the light of Reason must be brought to bear on

all established usages, for Sir Edward Coke has declared that no unreasonable custom has the force of law. The case against a slavish adhesion to precedent is thus summarized: "Let Custom be the Rule, and Power the Jugg, and then there will be many Tyrants but more slaves." For the past eight years, say the commonalty, they have petitioned Parliament for redress, and have obtained several orders which the oligarchy have disregarded, "speaking very contemptuously against the Authority of Parliament."

From this usurpation of power by a minority, serious practical evils have sprung. Aliens have been admitted in such large numbers that they have succeeded in almost completely ousting Englishmen from the trade. "And if it shall be demanded how or by what means they got the Trade into their hands; we answer, That at the beginning of the War many of us and our Servants engaged for the Parliament, and in our absence, they being generally Malignant, staying at home, and keeping servants all of their own Country . . . by degrees got all the Trading, so that now the War is ended, and we returned to follow our Callings, we can get no employment." Many English weavers have been forced to renounce their craft, and make a living as best they can in less respectable occupations, while others have thrown themselves on the mercy of the parish.⁷⁵

The governors stated their case in a pamphlet called a *Breviate of the Weavers' Business before the House of Commons*. They began by refuting the charges of maladministration which the commonalty had brought against them. The accusation that they had admitted aliens in large numbers was greatly exaggerated, for during the past forty-seven years only 317 strangers had been admitted, and these were immigrants for conscience' sake. The governors rather weakened the force of their protestations by adding that, in any case, they had done their best to restrict the number of strangers, as was shown by a Bill read twice in Parliament. The commonalty's appeal for a democratic control of the revenue was impracticable. "If the generality of this or any other Corporation have a right to except against any part of the disbursement of their Master and Wardens, then their power will hold equall to except against all their accounts, which if graunted, it will unavoydably follow that Governours cannot purchase, let or set, or take up monies at interest upon the Common Seale of that Corporation, . . . without the consent of every individuall member of the same Company

...” The commonalty’s scepticism of the power of custom was ignored, and it was stated that the present method of electing the officers of a corporation by a certain select number had long been acknowledged to be good law, “for the avoiding of popular confusion (notwithstanding the word Commonalty specified in their Charter . . .)”. The governors made the usual answer to democratic agitation in an unsatisfactory business by stating that the real cause of distress in the weaving industry was not defective organization, but “the generall obstruction of Trade that hath been occasioned through the distraction of the times”, particular causes being the high price of silk and the influx of foreign imports.⁷⁶

The seriousness of the agitation in the Weavers’ Company led Parliament to legislate on the question. In December, 1648, the commonalty of the Weavers came once more into the House of Commons to present a petition from “the distressed commonalty of Weavers, London, being many thousands”.⁷⁷ Four days later, the “matter of fact” in the business concerning the Weavers was reported to the House, and a petition from the governors of the Company was also read. The business was referred back to the committee, with power to call before them both parties, and to present an ordinance for settling the “Government and Peace” of the whole Company.⁷⁸ In the early months of 1649, the “Weavers’ Act” was read a first⁷⁹ and second time and committed,⁸¹ and on 21st February an “act for the Election of the Bailiffs, Wardens, Assistants and other Officers of the Company of Weavers” was read a third time and passed.⁸¹ The governors were reluctant to admit what seems to have been a defeat, and in March they again petitioned the Commons.⁸²

The Weavers’ records are most complete for the years 1652 to 1655, and they contain indications of the terms of the Weavers’ Act and its effect on the government of the Company.⁸³ In April, 1652, it was stated that: “Upon reading certaine proposessions drawne upp for the good of the trade and Company, the Court of Assistants and Representatives doe agree and order that the Representatives in their severall divissons shall chuse two meete persons out of every division, to be joyned with other persons to be likewise chosen out of the Court of Assistants and Livery to be a Committee, to consider of those propositions and what-soever else may be thought good by them for the Trade and

Company, and to prepare them for an Act of Parliament. And likewise for settleing of a yeomandry.”⁸⁴ This entry is vigorously crossed out, but in August, 1653, an almost identical entry appears, though the sentence which deals with the yeomanry runs, “and likewise for settleing of ordinances with a yeomandry for the findeing and reforming of abuses in the Trade.” There follows a list of the representatives chosen for the committee,⁸⁵ and a month later they met to consider the propositions which had been put before them, and appointed a date for their next meeting.⁸⁶ In June, 1654, the records state that, “upon this day some proceedings was made concerning a yeomandry, and severall persons chosen by the Bayliffs, Wardens, Assistants, and Representatives”. There follows a list of nineteen persons.⁸⁷

The fate of this late-born Yeomanry organization is indicated in the commonalty's eloquent pamphlet. It states that the oligarchy “have dismissed the Yeomandry contrary to six severall Orders made with their consent by the Lord Mayor and Court of Aldermen”. The reason for this treatment was not far to seek, for the Yeomanry had been authorized to discover and check abuses in the trade, such as intruders and deceitful work. “Now therefore the Governors gain by Intruders, making them pay for their Permission, and driving the greatest Trade, make much slight and deceitful work, therefore they have dismissed the said Yeomandry . . .”⁸⁸

Part of the Act of 1649 seems to have dealt with the question of finance. In February, 1655, the Court Book stated that “whereas by vertue of an Act of Parliament ye Commonaltie have power to choose eight Auditors yearely,” the Company had decided that, to facilitate the business of accounts, the “Representatives” should be told “that when they elect eight Auditors, foure of the same eight be of them that were chosen the yeare before to the end they may be instructed in the manner and way of Auditing”.⁸⁹ In addition to provisions for the auditing of the Company's accounts, the Act evidently contained penalties which could be inflicted on those who were found guilty of mal-administration. In 1653, an entry in the Court Book states that, whereas it had been enacted by Parliament that the auditors should report any sums which had not been spent for the Company's benefit, and that the offender should make the sum good out of his own estate, John Howitt, Master of the Company, had been found guilty of this offence and was

therefore suspended from holding further office in the Company, according to the terms of the said Act.⁹⁰ A year later, a formal protest against evasion of the Act was entered in the Court Book. The entry declared that W. Jackson, J. Hooker, J. Howitt, and T. Hall were chosen Bailiffs and Wardens of the Company on the first Thursday in March, 1649, "according to an Act of Parliament then obtained. And for the better obtaineing of a stocke and Treasure, they to discharge the trust reposed in them att the end of this yeare ought to have their accounts Audited and entered in a Book, fairly written, subscribed by the eight Auditors chosen according to the aforesaid Act . . ." But the Bailiffs and Wardens neglected to do this, "leaving itt as an ill president and greate preju'ce to the Guild or Company." Some months later, it was recorded that W. Jackson and one or two others had smuggled the ledger books out of the Hall, and taken them secretly to a scrivener's shop, "and there did cause an account to be entered in the name of the Bayliffs and Wardens, according to their owne directions, and contrary to the tennor of the said Act of Parliament and the Trust reposed in them . . ." ⁹¹ With the entry of this protest, the recorded history of the agitation in the Weavers' Company comes to an abrupt end.

The Yeomanry organization of the Weavers' Company was not alone in meeting with opposition from the senior oligarchy. In the Cutlers' Company, disputes between different sections of the trade had taken place at the beginning of the seventeenth century,⁹² and during the Interregnum they became more serious. In January, 1650, the working Cutlers presented a petition to the Court of Assistants for redress of various abuses which had crept into their trade and now threatened to ruin it, and a committee, consisting of eight working Cutlers and eight members of the Court of Assistants, was appointed to consider the question.⁹³ Then, during the next year, trouble arose with the Yeomanry organization, which presented a paper to the Court of Assistants, requesting that its power should be enlarged. This the Court flatly refused to do, reminding the Yeomanry that the Act on which their present existence depended had been passed after they had just emerged from a period of complete extinction, imposed upon them for their sins.⁹⁴ A decade later, in 1663, the implied threat was carried out, and the Yeomanry of the Company were abolished on the grounds that they had exceeded their powers by adding to

their membership without permission from the Court of Assistants, and neglecting to present their accounts of quarteridge and other fines.⁹⁵

In the Leathersellers' Company, also, refractory behaviour on the part of the Yeomanry organization led to its dissolution. Here the trouble arose through the continued refusal of the Wardens of the Yeomanry to pay their fines.⁹⁶ The Court of Assistants sent a sharp reminder, and were met with an equally sharp retort that there were other members of the Company besides the Yeomanry who were behind-hand with their fines. Considering that the situation had become serious and that such open disregard of authority might develop into a precedent, the Court decided to take legal opinion on how the Yeomanry could be forced to pay.⁹⁷ Subsequent attempts to extract payment having failed, the Court went on to question the whole constitution and functions of the Yeomanry organization. They finally came to the conclusion that the association was unnecessary and useless, that its attitude to the Assistants was a dangerous example to the other members of the Company, and, finally, that if the Wardens did not pay their fines, the Court would make void all subsequent elections of Yeomanry officials.⁹⁸ Nevertheless, the Yeomanry remained obdurate, and refused either to pay their fines or hold their annual dinner, "alledging that they were not men of such quallity and condicion as this Courte tooke them to bee . . .". The Court thereupon carried out their threat. At the end of July, 1656, they annulled the office of the Yeomanry Wardens until further notice,⁹⁹ and a few days later the son of the Clerk was ordered to take over their duty of collecting quarteridge money from the generality.¹⁰⁰

The democratic movement in the Pewterers' Company began at an earlier date than in any of the other Companies. In September, 1641, the Court of Aldermen appeared as arbitrators in a "difference" between the governors and the generality of the Company. They appointed a day for the hearing of the dispute, and added that the Pewterers should be allowed to investigate the charter and such other records of the Company as they might desire.¹⁰¹ The results of this free inspection of the records were not long in making themselves felt. At a meeting of the Court of Assistants on 6th September, Mr. Kimberley and others of the generality appeared before them, and declared that, as a result of the investigation of the charter, they had come to the conclusion

that "there is power given to ye whole Commonaltie to rule and governe ye brothers and members of this Companie as well as ye Master, Wardens and Assistants, and for that intent and purpose they are come to desire their priviledge accordingly . . ." The Master ordered them to put their grievances in writing, but the commonalty refused to do this, and declared that they would "deliver their reasons to a superior or higher power". It is possible that the higher authority which the commonalty had in mind was Parliament. If so, their hopes were crushed, for the Master replied that, as freemen of the City of London, they were sworn not to seek redress outside its limits. He promised that the Company, meaning the Master, Wardens and Assistants, would be ready to answer them before the Lord Mayor and Court of Aldermen, but they refused to submit to this arbitration, "and soe departed."¹⁰² Nevertheless, on 5th October, the Court of Aldermen was engaged in hearing the commonalty's allegations against the Master and Wardens. Since it was stated by the commonalty's counsel that the hearing of their grievances would take some time, a committee of the Aldermen was appointed to call before them the Master, Wardens, Assistants and six of the commonalty, and hear their case. In the meantime, the counsel for the commonalty was to be allowed to view the Company's charter and ordinances.¹⁰³

At a subsequent meeting, the Pewterers' Court offered to refer the points in dispute to a committee of twelve, six being chosen from among the Assistants and Livery, and six from the Yeomanry.¹⁰⁴ Towards the end of 1641, an attempt was made to carry this resolution into effect, but with an important difference. The Master and Wardens now declared that they were willing to delegate the proposed discussion before the Court of Aldermen to a committee of six, to be chosen as follows:—The Master was to nominate six members of the Livery, and the whole Court of Assistants was to nominate an equal number out of the Yeomanry, the final choice from these twelve resting with the Assistants. This method of selection obviously put the whole power into the hands of the Court of Assistants, and it is not surprising that the commonalty "soe disturbed ye Court by their refusalls that nothing was at this Court done".¹⁰⁵ This early attack of democratic agitation seems to have inoculated the Pewterers against the widespread upheaval which took place in most of the other companies about 1650,¹⁰⁶ for

there is no trace in their records of any further attempt on the part of the commonalty to improve their position.

The history of the craft guilds between 1640 and 1660 is in the form of a question and answer, the question being whether the oligarchic constitution of the Livery Company would adapt itself to the demands of a growing class of wage-earners, who had little or no share in the government of their crafts. It has been seen that the answer was distinctly unfavourable, for the democratic movement in the guilds achieved no substantial or lasting success, even during a period when innovations in political government might have inclined both Parliament and City to favour innovations in industrial organization. With the Restoration, all hope of reform along the lines projected by Commonwealth agitators vanished. There remained the expedient of new incorporation, which, under Charles I, had done something to improve the lot of the wage-earners and small masters. But it soon became apparent that this avenue of escape was closed. The importunities of the lower orders under the Commonwealth had forced the oligarchic interest in the City and Livery Companies to close its ranks and strengthen its fortifications. When in 1673 the Paviers' Company applied for a charter, the City entered a *caveat* against their petition, and in 1698 the Court of Aldermen refused to give the Basketmakers leave to seek incorporation.

The Sawyers, on the other hand, met with opposition from the Carpenters, Joiners and Shipwrights, who declared that the smallest incorporation among them would bring trade to a standstill.¹⁰⁷ This failure to adapt the traditional gild organization to their needs drove the wage-earners to make incoherent, scattered attempts at secret combination, from which, in the course of another century, there evolved the earliest specimens of the modern Trade Union.

(II) THE CITY GOVERNMENT

The government of the City and its Companies was so closely connected, both in constitutional mechanism and in personnel, that it was natural for democratic agitation in the one to be accompanied by a parallel agitation in the other.

As in the case of the central government, the constitution of the City depended on custom rather than upon law.¹⁰⁸ The Lord Mayor, as the chief magistrate of the City, presided

over the Court of Aldermen, the Common Council and the Common Hall, and was chairman of every committee which he attended. His control over administrative matters was wide, and he possessed, says Pulling, "nearly all the powers which Mr. Justice Blackstone attributes to the crown over the rest of the kingdom." By the time of Edward IV, it had become established that the Lord Mayor's election should be confined to the Liveries of the various Companies. The Aldermen were chiefly important when acting in their capacity of an independent court, with legislative and executive powers, but every Alderman was *ex officio* a member of the Common Council, and two of them besides the Lord Mayor had to be present to make a quorum. In the seventeenth century and for some time previously, the Aldermen claimed a negative voice in the proceedings of this body, which was chosen yearly by the various wards, and exercised similar, though subordinate functions to the Court of Aldermen.¹⁰⁹

This constitution bore a marked resemblance to that of the central government, and, while the democratic movement in the guilds was probably influenced by the extreme theories of the Sects, the agitation in the City government followed closely along the lines laid down by Parliament. Partly for this reason, it received considerable support from the Government. But, apart from altruistic motives, Parliament had a strong incentive to propitiate the dominant party in the City, for during these years political, military and financial considerations made it a powerful ally and a dangerous enemy. In 1648, when the City had successfully pressed for the control of the militia, a deputation of Lords and Commons waited on the Common Council to tell them that the House had granted their desire. In return for this concession, Parliament expected the City to ward off rebellions and riots, and "did now put themselves really and truly in the hands of the City".¹¹⁰ This incident is typical of many occasions on which the City acted almost like an independent power in its dealings with the central Government.

The presence of a considerable democratic element in the Common Council was indicated at the famous trial of John Lilburne at the Guildhall in 1649. When a verdict of acquittal was announced, "the whole multitude in the hall, for joy of the prisoner's acquittal, gave such a loud and unanimous shout as is believed was never heard in Guildhall, which lasted for about half an hour without intermission." The Common Council showed their admiration of the popular

hero by electing him a member of their body, but when the Mayor and Aldermen represented the case to Parliament, his election was declared void.¹¹¹

Contemporary pamphlets show considerable popular discontent with the existing constitution of London. Lilburne's indignation was doubtless strengthened by the attitude of the City Fathers towards himself. He declared that "although the tyranny whereby a City or State oppresseth her people may for the present seem to be more moderate than that of one man; yet in many things it is more intollerable; And it will clearly appeare that the miseries wherewith a Tyrant loadeth his people cannot be so heavy as burthens imposed by a cruell city". The charter granted by King John to the City gave the right of election to every baron, which meant every freeholder, but, of late years, the Aldermen and Common Council had invaded the people's rights and privileges and usurped the sole government of the City. Lilburne went on to describe the way in which the Lord Mayor was elected in 1646, when a party of London citizens came to the Guildhall, determined to vote at the election, but were forcibly prevented from entering.¹¹²

Political monopoly, he says, has led on to industrial and commercial monopoly, for, by the "craft and policy" of the London government, many patents have been bought under pretext of public benefit.¹¹³ Nor have the evil effects of this rule stopped short at London, for the "prerogative-men" have "inslaved not only this City, but beene strong Instruments from time to time to doe the same to the whole Land".¹¹⁴ It is only just that monopolizing corporations should be dissolved now that the prerogative power which created them has fallen. If it is true that the King has no legislative power in himself, as Parliament has maintained in recent declarations, then he cannot confer such power on the Lord Mayor and Aldermen. The true source of legislative power is the people, and the Lord Mayor and Aldermen are only their representatives. The citizens were also urged to prevent the Aldermen from exercising undue influence at the election of Common Councilmen, and were reminded that the Councillors' chief duty was to call all magistrates and public servants to account, "and to know of them what they have done with those many hundred thousands of pounds that yearly is paid unto the Chamber of London."¹¹⁵ A broadside published in 1648 described the way in which wealth had become the only criterion in the choice of City officers.

"And whereas it hath beene of late yeares used that when there is a Sheriff or Alderman to be chosen, enquiry is made for the richest men in the City, which is quite contrary to the Charter, for mention is made to choose honest men fit for Government, and not to choose men because they are rich, as is frequently practised in most parts of the land . . ." ¹¹⁶

J. Bellamie was a lesser known, but no less stalwart champion of the citizens' case than John Lilburne. Like most writers, he began by citing the various charters on which the commonalty's claims were based, and declared that "it is cleare that the Commonalty have by the Charters an equall share with the Mayor and Aldermen in the priviledges granted to this City; and if there be any difference, as there is, in the choice of some City Officers, the advantage is unto the Commons". Bellamie denied that the Mayor and Aldermen had a right to exercise a negative voice in the proceedings of the Common Council. This denial was based partly on precedent and partly on equity and justice, for, while there were only twenty-six Aldermen, the Common Council numbered about 250. Yet, when the Aldermen exercised their negative voice, "we must all sit still and sigh with our fingers in our eyes, and morne and die for the meere will and pleasure's sake of twenty-six single persons." Like the commonalty of the Weavers, Bellamie denounced his opponents' reliance on an unjust custom. "So say I in this, what God and what the Charter of our City hath joyned together, let not man, let not your Lordships pretended Prerogatives, let not unwarranted custome, either put or keepe asunder." ¹¹⁷ Bellamie referred to the parallel democratic reform which had taken place in the central government, and remarked "If an Arbitrary government be so destructive in the Commonwealth, surely it is equally as dangerous to suffer it in the city". ¹¹⁸

An anonymous writer, who describes himself as "Lysimachus", replied to Bellamie in an epistle to the Lord Mayor and Aldermen. He urged them to remember that the power which they exercised by virtue of their charter was theirs to possess and not to give away. It would be a sin to allow the City to return to chaos, "by thrusting it into the hands of the Multitude, whom a great Emperor long agoe compared to fire and water, that are good Servants and bad Masters." ¹¹⁹

In 1646, Bellamie once more took up his pen in answer

to a remonstrance to Parliament from the City government, which petitioned against the number of sectaries in London, and then asked that no one disaffected to Parliament should occupy a position of trust.¹²⁰ He drew a distinction between the "city representative" and the "city collective", and declared that there were limits beyond which the former might not go. The city representative is chosen by the city collective and should always act for its good, "but it is more common than commendable for men betruſted with other men's goods, to behave themſelves to their truſtees' hurt. There are foure caſes wherein the City collective is not bound to the City representative, but ought in duty to diſſent from it, if not to proteſt againſt it." The firſt of theſe caſes is when it acts againſt the "will and word of God", the ſecond is when it diſregards the good of the kingdom, the third is when it acts contrary to the "proper end of its own being, the Citie's welfare", and the fourth when it goes beyond the limits ſet to its power. In the preſent inſtance, the City government has violated all theſe rules, and ſhould therefore be recalled by the City collective.¹²¹ This advocacy of direct action provoked a vindication of the City's petition, in which it was pointed out that Bellamie's doctrines would involve the overthrow of repreſentative government. "What I pray, will this produce, think you, in the Commonwealth and Kingdom of England, if the Kingdom collective, which is the body of the Commons of England, apprehend that the Kingdom repreſentative, which is the Houſe of Commons . . . doe act as in any of the foure particular caſes you inſtance . . . ?" ¹²²

Deſpite the indignation which it cauſed, Bellamie's appeal to direct democracy appears to have evoked or coincided with ſome popular agitation on the ſame ſubject. In 1647, the freemen of London reminded the Common Council that they had been elected "to preſerve our Liberties, not intrall them", and went on to make known to them certain points, ſuch as a peace policy and the diſbanding of the army, which were to be communicated to the Lord Mayor and Aldermen. "Of theſe our deſires," ſay the freemen, "we expect a ſpeedy Account from you, or otherwiſe ſhall declare That you have broke the truſt reſoſed in you by us. And therefore we may, and ought to revoke our Election."¹²³ A year later, a petition ſigned by "many thouſands" of London citizens, demanded that a Common Hall ſhould be ſummoned, ſince in matters of extraordinary

importance every member of the City should be consulted personally, instead of representatively.¹²⁴

Effective reform in the City government proceeded along more moderate lines than those suggested by the pamphleteers. One of the points of dispute at the time when the reform movement was at its height was the manner of electing the Lord Mayor and Sheriffs, and, according to various entries in the Lords' Journals, this question was raised as early as 1641. In the June of that year, the Lords were considering the differences which existed between the Lord Mayor and Aldermen and the commonalty with regard to the election of one of the sheriffs, and also the dispute between the Lord Mayor and the commonalty over the nomination and election of other officers. They ordered the Lord Mayor to call together a Common Hall, consisting of the Master, Wardens and Liverymen of the Companies, and the commonalty were then to assemble to "settle and compose the differences between the said Lord Mayor and themselves if they can." If they failed to do so, six discreet persons were to be chosen to settle all differences, but, if the worst should happen and no settlement should be arrived at, the case was to be heard in the House of Lords on 9th July.¹²⁵

Both discussion and arbitration seem to have failed, for on 8th July the Lords ordered that the case of the City election should be heard the following Monday, the Lord Mayor, Aldermen and six persons chosen by the commonalty being present.¹²⁶ A week later, on reading the petition of the commonalty that the Lord Mayor and Aldermen were keeping the knowledge of the City documents from them, it was ordered that the hearing should be postponed to 24th July, "and it is further Ordered, That if the said Lord Mayor do not show Cause To-morrow to the contrary, then the other Part of the Petition is also granted."¹²⁷ The next day, the Lords ordered that six representatives of the commonalty should be allowed to peruse the records,¹²⁸ and on 26th July the case was heard, the Lords deciding to determine it on the following Saturday, unless the Lord Mayor and the commonalty were able to reach an agreement in the meantime.¹²⁹ Five days later, the parties reported that they had been unable to come to an agreement, and their case was therefore referred to a committee of the Lords.¹³⁰ On August 21, the Lord Privy Seal reported that the committee had attempted to compose the differences between the

parties, but had failed. Hereupon, Lord Say and Seale and the Bishop of Lincoln were appointed to withdraw and consider an order which would settle the disputed election of the sheriff, "which order is to be entered in the Books of the Chamber of London."¹³¹

Another attempt to reform elections which took place in 1641 was the investigation of the way in which Common Councilmen were chosen. The Journals of the Common Council for March, 1641, contain the report of a committee which had been looking into this matter. This report declared that the Councilmen ought to be elected in wardmote by all inhabitants who paid scot and lot, and that, though the "precincts" might meet previously to consider which men were fit to be elected, they should be empowered only to present the names of such persons to the wardmote. The actual course of proceedings in the various wards showed that the Aldermen had been exercising undue influence. In Cornhill, they had insisted at the last wardmote on the retention of two former councillors, and, though many of the inhabitants tried to exercise their right to a negative voice, they were forcibly prevented. The Langborne Alderman frankly admitted that "hee refused to permitt the said Inhabitants to choose any of their Common Councillmen for the yeare in the Wardmote . . . Affirminge that they were all chosen before accordinge to antient custome in the precinctes" Moreover, the number of councillors in this ward had been wrongfully reduced from ten to eight. There had been a similar reduction in the number of representatives from Farringdon Ward, and it was reported that, at the last election, the Alderman had pressed two candidates of his own, neither of whom had been properly nominated.¹³²

About 1649 the question of elections was raised again, and this time assumed much larger proportions, a pamphleteer of 1650 declaring that one of the most glaring instances of the enslavement of the English people which the recent troubles had brought to light was their subjection to oppressive corporations, which ruled over them without their consent.¹³³ In the autumn of 1649, the Common Council read a petition from "divers well-affected" citizens, protesting against the present manner of electing the Lord Mayor. The Council were of opinion that the Mayor had been chosen according to well-established precedent, but they appointed a committee to search all records which dealt

with the subject, and report thereon.¹³⁴ A year later, the committee reported that, on investigating the charter of the City and other relevant documents, they had come to the conclusion that the Lord Mayor and Sheriffs ought to be elected by the commons and citizens, and that in former times this election had been carried out by persons chosen from the wards, together with the Common Council.¹³⁵

At the Guildhall on December 14, 1650, a "learned argument of law and reason" took place before the Lord Mayor, Aldermen and Common Council, between representatives of the Livery Companies and representatives of the freemen. Maynard, Hales, and Wilde spoke for the former, and Wildman and Price for the latter, the point at issue being whether the Liveries or the freemen had the right to elect the Lord Mayor. The Companies based their claims on established right and expediency. They stated that, in the reign of Edward IV, it had been established that the Liveries of the Companies should meet together at Guildhall to elect the Mayor, and, since they represented the commonalties of the City and Companies, they *were* these bodies for all practical purposes. But, apart from the question of legal right, it would be unwise to overthrow well-tried methods of election in obedience to popular clamour. The majority of governments did not rest on popular consent, and there was no good reason why they should do so, for "popularity" soon degenerated into mob rule. "But truly," says Mr. Maynard, "I do not look upon this as the greatest danger; but there is this in it also; the foundation upon which this is grounded . . . in this case is undermined . . . for after this example, truly all the Governments and Corporations of this Kingdom will receive such shakings as I blush to mention, when they shall consider the Ancient Government of this City, so backed with Lawful authority, put into a new way. There is not a more dangerous thing in my understanding." Mr. Hales said that if once popular government were introduced it would be impossible to know where to draw the line, and the next development would be that foreigners and apprentices would clamour for a share in it.

Wildman retorted that those who threw stones at popular government were themselves dwellers in glass houses. "If I should speak of the Education of most of the Livery men of the forty Companies of this City, and compute their number, and tell you upon what terms most are admitted

to be of the Liveries, that is, for a small sum of money, I conceive the Court would quickly judg which way of Election tends most to popularity, as he calls it . . .” The democratic party did not dispute the fact that elections were at present in the hands of the Liveries, but they questioned its immutability. All citizens who paid taxes had the right to vote in City elections, yet, in the present circumstances, neither the citizens nor the ordinary members of the companies played any part therein. The opposition had tried to draw a parellel between private property in votes and private property in land, and, arguing from the case of the latter, had declared that it was a bad and dangerous thing to meddle with existing titles. But Wildman retorted: “I suppose no man pleads for like title to Power or Authority over people that men have to Lands, or on the same grounds.” If it were so, “it would be just to buy or sell authority or places of trust and government as we buy and sell horses.” When, in the following century, the two forms of property were equated, those who owned “authority over people” drew the same deduction from their unqualified ownership as Wildman had done. But in 1650 existing rights were not secure from criticism, and Wildman was repeating a well-worn phrase when he declared that according to Parliament’s own words, “the original of all just power under God proceeds from the People.”¹³⁶

This democratic agitation within the very stronghold of oligarchy did not fail to arouse alarm. In October, 1650, the Court of Aldermen were reminded that the Companies wished their opinion to be heard before any measure was passed in response to the agitation in Common Council “for altering ye Antient Course of elecons of the Lord Maior and other officers from the Liveryes of this Citty.” The Court ordered that notice should be given in writing to the twelve Companies that “such things are in debate”.¹³⁷ At a Court of the Goldsmiths’ Company held in November, 1650, there was read a copy of a petition from the Wardens of the twelve great Companies for continuing the election of the Lord Mayor in the old way.¹³⁸ The Drapers and Ironmongers and probably other City Gilds made their protest, the latter declaring that the Companies had long borne great responsibilties in the City, “and that soe great a parte of this Cittie is now settled in the severall Companies, as that, if a disturbance thereof be made, it may be feared

in time to bring a ruyn on ye whole.”¹³⁹ In November, 1650, the Common Council ordered that the debate on the manner of electing the Lord Mayor and other officers should take place upon the following day.¹⁴⁰

A year later, an Act of Common Council was passed with the intention of definitely establishing the Lord Mayor's election on a democratic basis. The preamble stated that, according to the ancient charters of the City, the election of the Lord Mayor and other officers lay with the commonalty, or with their representatives, but of recent years the Master, Wardens, and Livery of the various City Companies had usurped the right to elect. The Act went on to explain that “divers Companies of the citizens of this Citty have not Liveries at all, and soe have noe manner of vote in the elecons by Liveries. And for that by the constitution of most of the other Companies the Liveries thereof are not chosen by the whole brotherhood, but by a few, as namely the wardens and assistants only, and therby the greatest part of the Citizens members of those Companies are also excluded from haveinge any vote either in person or representation . . .” Thus, it had become necessary to re-establish the City government on its old democratic basis. It was enacted that the election of the Lord Mayor, Sheriffs, Burgesses, and other officers should take place in the Common Hall. Each ward was to be represented at the elections by its Aldermen and Common Councilmen, and an equal number of “honest men” of the ward.¹⁴¹ A few days after this Act was passed, the Goldsmiths' records state that a Court was called purposely to consider the exclusion of the Liverymen from the election of the City officers. Alderman Noell explained the reason for their meeting, and added that the Wardens of the twelve Companies had agreed that they, or other representatives of the Companies, should join together to present a petition to Parliament “for redresse in this particular”.¹⁴² In December, 1651, the House of Commons resolved that the petition of the Lord Mayor and Aldermen should be referred to the Council of State, and that, in the meantime, the Act passed by the Common Council should be suspended.¹⁴³

It is doubtful if the Act of November, 1651, was ever put into practice. In the Books of Common Hall for 1653, and succeeding years, the following summons appears, directed to the Master and Wardens of the various companies. “Whereas the Lord Mayor of this citty for the yeare's ensuing, according

to auntient custome is to be chosen on Thursday next . . . These are therefore to require you to cause the Livery of ye Company . . . to come together . . . to Guildhall according to the usuall manner . . . to perform the said elecon.”¹⁴⁴ Another indication that the Act remained a dead letter was the Common Council’s decision in 1659 to petition Parliament that no restraint should be laid upon the people in their election of the Lord Mayor, and that the ancient charters, customs, and rights in that and all other elections should be examined.¹⁴⁵

The use which the chief officers of the City made of their power was severely criticized. The debate on *London’s Liberties*, which has already been described, was said to have originated in an enquiry as to the reasons for the City’s bankruptcy, and a discovery that “the chief Officers had been very faulty.” According to the list of accounts printed in this pamphlet, money had been squandered on “extraordinary expenses”, such as gifts to the King and feasts.¹⁴⁶ Another writer stated that “it is grown almost the common discourse of every one of you, that the City Banke and Revenue is by undue means exhausted, and the Orphans’ money uncharitably and unconscionably embezzled, and the City itself impaired in its credit”. The pamphleteer went on to suggest various remedies by which the finances might be placed on a more satisfactory footing. At present, the whole revenue came into one account, and, as the vast and unnecessary expenditure exceeded the revenue, the orphans’ fund was subjected to constant encroachments. To reform this abuse, two distinct accounts should be kept for the City and the orphans, and the expenses of the former should be strictly in accordance with its receipts. Two committees were to be chosen to audit the two accounts, and, if the Chamberlain issued out any money except by an act of Common Council and order of the committee, he should be forced to re-imburse the same and forfeit his place. The functions, period of office, and allowance of every City officer were to be clearly defined, “that so controversies about these particulars may be at end; and that as well the Officer may know what he has to doe, and how farre he is authorized; and that the people likewise may know when, and how far each Officer exceeds the bounds and limits of his Authority.”¹⁴⁷

The actual course of proceedings in the City government did not carry out all the pamphleteer’s suggestions,

but at least showed a determination on the part of the commonalty to limit extravagance and corruption. In November, 1649, the Common Council ordered that a committee should be appointed to consider which of the expenses of the Lord Mayor and Sheriff were necessary and which were superfluous, and what maintenance should be continued. They were also to make enquiries as to the number of officers appointed, how these appointments had been made, and how the officers had acquitted themselves.¹⁴⁸ A few days later, the committee reported that their preliminary investigations had shown that the question under review was complicated, and would take up a good deal of time. They recommended that, in the interval, the Council should pass a measure to "forbid and hinder the sellinge, alienatinge, or placeinge of any officers' places, or offices in this City without ye order and consent of this court."¹⁴⁹

Probably as a result of this committee's recommendations, the Common Council took action in December, 1649. They stated that complaints had reached them of the Lord Mayor and Sheriff selling places of trust, in order to recoup themselves for the great charges which they had to bear. Under such a system, the emphasis was laid on ability to pay rather than on fitness to serve. From henceforth this practice was to cease, and a definite allowance of £208 6s. 8d. a month for the Lord Mayor, and £150 for each of the sheriffs was to take its place.¹⁵⁰

There seems to be an inseparable connection between civic office and high living. The Common Council now attempted to sever it by laying down a maximum menu for each occasion. No Mayor or Sheriff was to be served at dinner with more than one course, and this course, when served on the Lord's Day, Tuesday, Thursday, or any ordinary festival day, was not to include more than seven dishes of meat. On Monday, Wednesday, Friday, or Saturday there were not to be more than five dishes of meat, or six of fish, but mere *hors d'oeuvres* like "brawne, callups with eggs, sallettes, broth, butter, cheese, eggs, herrings, shrimps," were not to be subject to rationing.¹⁵¹ Again, in 1651, a committee was appointed to enquire what profits or perquisites were connected with the offices of Lord Mayor and Sheriff, "and how they came so to belong or to be received."¹⁵² So vigorous were the Council's attempts at retrenchment, that when J. Kendricke was elected Mayor in 1651, he insisted

that, having no large private income, he could not undertake office "upon such termes as never any had donne before him, the antient perquisites and late allowances made in consideration thereof being wholly taken away."¹⁵³ The question of allowances was difficult to solve, and in 1652 the Council seem to have reverted to the old system. They resolved that succeeding Lord Mayors and Sheriffs should receive, as an allowance for their public charges, the ancient perquisites themselves.¹⁵⁴

The most important and most successful agitation in the City government was that which dealt with the relations of the Common Council to the Lord Mayor and Aldermen. The powers of the Lord Mayor over the Council were very much like those of Charles I over Parliament. He called the assembly, presided over it, together with two of the Aldermen, and for some time previous to 1640 had claimed a negative voice. It was evident that any attempt to reform the City government would be of little use until the power of the Lord Mayor and Aldermen had been considerably curtailed. Among the Guildhall manuscripts is a description, written in a seventeenth century hand, of some "extraordinary passages in Common Council", which deals at some length with the revolutionary attitude of this body during the Civil Wars and Commonwealth. A development which struck this writer as having a sinister significance was the way in which the Councilmen then sat with their hats on during the meeting, "for," says he, "ther sitting covered . . . intimated a parity, resembling the rudeness of a popular state not the reverence and decency of a Monarchical frame, as is that of the City's government."¹⁵⁵ The question of how the Council was to be called was raised in 1642, and Mr. Solicitor and others were ordered to attend a committee, which was sitting to try the cause in debate between the Lord Mayor and Aldermen and Common Council concerning the calling and regulating of Common Councils.¹⁵⁶ Two years later, it was resolved that the Council should have power to appoint the time of their next meeting, and that, in case of emergency, any four Aldermen and eight commoners might go to the Lord Mayor and request that a Council should be called. If the Mayor refused, the eldest of the Aldermen was to act as *locum tenens*, with power to call the Council. Hitherto, the negative voice of the Lord Mayor and Aldermen had enabled them to control the legislation passed at any

meeting of the Common Council. In describing the "extraordinary passages" of these years, the writer declares that their veto had never been questioned till some time about the year 1642, during Pennington's mayoralty, "when that and indeed almost all other privileges of the Court of Aldermen were invaded by the Commons in those times of rebellion . . . Indeed in those times, the Lord Mayor and Aldermen coming under a force . . . were numbered with the Commons, February, 1641. Forthwith, afterward the Commons obtained an ordinance of the then Parliament and also to call a Common Council without the Lord Mayor, 24 February, 1648-9."¹⁵⁷

This account of the agitation against the Lord Mayor is borne out by the evidence of the City records. In January, 1644, the Court of Aldermen debated the question at issue between the Lord Mayor and Commons of the City as to whether the Lord Mayor and Aldermen had a negative voice. The Aldermen resolved that, by the ancient customs and charters of the City, they and the Lord Mayor possessed this right.¹⁵⁸ A year later, the Common Council received the report of a committee on the same matter. The committee advised that the Lord Mayor and Commons should join in a petition to Parliament and refer themselves to its final arbitration. In the meantime, the Lord Mayor and Aldermen were not to hinder any matter put to the vote which was for the public good of the City, "and the Common Council to proceed in this vote as they have done since the time that Alderman Pennington was elected Lord Mayor of this Citie." The Common Council signified their approval of this report.¹⁵⁹

From the foregoing account, it seems clear that the violent dissensions between the Lord Mayor and Common Council which marked the early months of 1649 were the climax of a movement which had been going on since the early years of the Civil War, and were not, as has sometimes been suggested, merely the result of political differences between a Royalist Lord Mayor (Abraham Reynoldson) and a Parliamentarian Common Council.¹⁶⁰ Nevertheless, it is true that the political situation must have increased the friction between the parties, and have inclined Parliament to take the side of the Common Council. The election of Reynoldson in 1648 alarmed the Government, and in December, 1648, they passed an ordinance expelling malignants from the City.¹⁶¹ When the Council came to

take their seats, the Mayor forbade them to proceed unless they were willing to take the oath of allegiance to the King, but, on this action being reported to the House of Commons, he was ordered to summon the Council at once and dispense with the taking of oaths until further notice.¹⁶²

On 13th January, 1649, a momentous assembly of the Common Council occurred, a report of which was later presented to the House of Commons.¹⁶³ On this occasion the councillors appeared in answer to a lawful summons, and the Lord Mayor accompanied by two Aldermen took the chair. Throughout the meeting, the Lord Mayor's behaviour was deliberately obstructive. The Council first desired that the acts which were passed at the last meeting should be confirmed, but "could not obteyne the same (though earnestly desired) for above an howre's space". After this, the members of a committee attempted to read a petition, but, despite the pressure of the whole Council, the Lord Mayor flatly refused to allow the matter to be considered. "After a long delay, another question was drawn up, which the Lord Mayor also refused to consider, and hereupon the Council declared "how unjust and of what a destructive nature to the beinge of the Courte such a denyall would bee." At this, the Lord Mayor and Aldermen rose and left the assembly, thereby dissolving it, if established precedent were to be followed. But the revolutionary ardour of the Council was not so easily quenched. They began by asking the Common Serjeant and the Town Clerk to stay and put the question in the place of the Lord Mayor, and when they refused, "in discharge of our trust and in our tender care of the common good of Citty and Kingdom, Wee did stay and remaine a courte wherein was thrice read and debated and voted (*nemine contradicente*) the petition hereunto annexed to be as this day presented to this honourable Howse." The House of Commons was urged to take such action as would enable the commons of London assembled in Council to be "usefull to the ends for which they were chosen".¹⁶⁴ In answer to this petition, the House resolved that the foregoing narrative should be entered in the records of the Common Council, and that the petition should be referred to a committee to advise thereon. Mr. Speaker added: "I am withal to tell you, That the House doth fully approve of your acting and resolving by yourselves as a Common Council, in case of Absence and Dissent in the Mayor or Aldermen." ¹⁶⁵

On 28th February, 1649, the Commons passed an Act which is not mentioned in Scobell and is accorded a mere reference in the Commons' Journals.¹⁶⁶ This Act greatly diminished the power of the Lord Mayor over the Common Council by providing for its summons without his consent, abolishing the veto of the Lord Mayor and Aldermen over its proceedings, and making their withdrawal of no effect. A Council might be summoned whenever ten or more councillors made this request to the Lord Mayor, and, if he refused to carry out their desire, then the ten councillors should have power to call an assembly, "and that the Members appeareinge upon the same summons beinge of the number of Fowerty or more shall become a Common Councell." The presidency of the Council belonged to the Lord Mayor, his *locum tenens* or the eldest Alderman, but in case of their neglect or refusal to perform their duties, it devolved on any other member of the Council who might be chosen for the time being. The negative voice of the Lord Mayor and Aldermen was definitely abolished, it being stated that their votes in Common Council were to carry exactly the same weight as those of ordinary members. Their withdrawal was to have no effect on the constitution of the Council, which was "to sitt and continue soe longe as the major parte of the saide Council shall thinke fitt and shall not be dissolved and adjourned but by and accordinge to the order or consent of the major part of the same Council." Lastly, it was provided that all acts, records and register books belonging to the City should be open to the perusal of every citizen.^{167*}

The history of the democratic movement in the City after the passing of this Act is the record of a determined attempt on the part of the Common Council to make good use of their newly won privileges, and an equally determined attempt on the part of the Lord Mayor to resist them. In October, 1649, the Council agreed that, in future, when they rose a time should be appointed for their next meeting.¹⁶⁸ During June of the next year, a Council was called by virtue of the terms of the Act of 1649. It was reported that the Lord Mayor and Aldermen had been desired to come to a Council which had been summoned at the request of fifteen councillors. When the Lord Mayor arrived, he declared that the reason why he had refused to call the assembly

* For the imitation of this Act by a provincial municipality, see *Northampton Borough Records*, *ul sup.*, II, 21.

was because the members who had requested it had refused to state the grounds for their action, and he now called upon them to do so. But some of the members objected that the Acts of the last Council should first be read, and a long discussion ensued. At last, the Acts were read, and then the report of a committee appointed for deciding "several businesses" was given as a reason for calling the meeting. At this point, the Lord Mayor declared that he was weary and would call another Council in the morning, but some members pressed to have the committee's report read, "whereupon his Lordship and all the Aldermen went away". Nevertheless, the Council continued to sit, and the report was read and it was decided that another Council should be held on the following Tuesday. According to a marginal note, these proceedings were disclaimed and repealed in 1683.¹⁶⁹ Again in 1653, there appears to have been a difference of opinion between the commoners and the Lord Mayor as to the summoning of a Council. The Lord Mayor declared that custom gave him the right of summons, and of knowing the reason why the assembly should be called, and that there was nothing in the late Act to prevent this. He complained that he had not been told the cause for the summoning of a Council on the previous day, and, for this and other reasons, had forbade it to be summoned, but nevertheless the meeting had taken place, "contrary to the said Custome and against his Lordship's order, and not . . . warranted by the said Act of Parliament." Then it was put to the question whether the Council approved of the resolutions and acts of the late assembly, and the vote was given in the affirmative, although the Lord Mayor declared his dissent.¹⁷⁰

The members of the Court of Aldermen were very much exercised in their minds about the encroachments of the Common Council during the years following 1648. In 1650, they appointed a committee to prepare a petition to Parliament, urging them to uphold "the auntient right of this Court in the government of the Citty which is now stiled Monarchicall and Tyrannicall, as alsoe the occasion of the Act of parliament for regulating Common Councells with the abuses thereof, and the bad consequences thereupon, with the scandalls lately cast upon the Court in print and otherwise."¹⁷¹ In October, 1651, a committee was ordered to attend the Council of State to discuss the differences between the Aldermen and the Common Councillors,¹⁷² and a month later the Aldermen read a paper which was to

be presented to that Council. This manifesto declared that "the auntient government, weale, peace and safetie of the citty . . . have beene entrusted with the Mayor, Aldermen and Sheriffes", but of late the Common Council had made serious encroachments on the established order of government. The number of Aldermen who used to be a necessary quorum in committees had been decreased or disregarded, and, whereas the Lord Mayor at one time had power to appoint executive officers and enjoy various perquisites, now the Commons, acting without the consent of their superiors, had assumed the right both to appoint officials and regulate the perquisites. Another grievance was that the Common Council had seized the financial reins, ordering that a committee of ten Aldermen and nine commoners should have the disposal of all the City's money, and that none should be paid out otherwise. The Aldermen prayed Parliament to strengthen their hands, and to give them both "power and perquisitts" enough to enable them to carry on their work.¹⁷³

The democratic movement in the City seems to have met with greater success than the parallel movement in the gilds, but, even so, its triumph was both partial and short lived. Certain aspects of reform, such as the democratic choice of the Lord Mayor, do not appear to have been even temporarily effective, and after the Restoration all the innovations of the Commonwealth were disclaimed. In April, 1660, the City government explained that "in the Generall deluge of disorder introduced uppon these Kingdomes in the yeare 1648, the Just Constitution of the government of this Citty was overturned into the hands of men of Loose and dangerous principles," who "stained the records of the Common Councill of London with most horrid Acts . . ." ¹⁷⁴ The author of the "extraordinary passages in Common Council" tells how a committee of Aldermen and commoners was appointed to examine the proceedings of those unruly years, "and to obliterate what should appear to them to favour the faction of those times." ¹⁷⁵ Thus, in the City records, all the chief democratic innovations which occur between 1640 and 1660 are crossed out or disclaimed by marginal notes, and it was not until the nineteenth century that any substantial alteration of the old order was effected.

CHAPTER VI

THE RELIEF OF THE POOR

"These are the times wherein (I thinke) never greater necessity and yet (I feare) never less charity . . ."

S. Rogers, *The Poor's Pension* (a sermon preached at Sudbury, Suffolk, 1648).

"Poverty renders man despicable . . . Therefore humane Industry is urgently necessary whereby to shun those mischiefs entailed on want."

T. Willsford, *The Scales of Commerce and Trade*, 1659.

(I) THE FALL OF THE STUART ADMINISTRATION

By the seventeenth century, the problem of poverty had definitely entered on its modern stage of development. In the Middle Ages, the case of the poor man had not given statesmen sleepless nights, for to them poverty was not a social evil which could be removed by human effort, but the result of uncontrollable manifestations of the hand of God, such as famine, old age or sickness. The stricken were left to the mercies of the church or the charity of private individuals, who thereby gained absolution from their sins and blessings for their souls.

The end of the fifteenth century marked the close of the period when this theory bore any relation to the facts. Trade increased in volume and widened in scope, agriculture broke loose from its customary bonds, and men had everywhere greater chances of rising to the heights of success or sinking to the depths of failure. The problem of poverty became inextricably mixed with that of unemployment, and at once lost its comparative simplicity. After nearly three-quarters of a century of repression, Tudor statesmen began to realize that the progress of enclosure and the increased number of vagabonds stood in the relation of cause and effect, and Bacon and Robert Cecil insisted that pauperism could not be considered apart from depopulation.

The development of legislation illustrates the change of opinion which had taken place. In the early years of the sixteenth century, it was not recognized that the old division of the poor into impotent and wilfully idle would no longer

square with the facts of the situation. The swarm of wandering beggars was viewed with uncomprehending alarm, and statesmen and municipalities attempted to lessen their numbers by still more severe punishments. This policy culminated in the statute of 1572, but from then onwards men began to realize that they were confronted by a problem which could not be solved by whipping the old Adam of idleness out of the vagabond. By 1601, this change of attitude was complete, for the most severe laws against vagabonds had been repealed, and legislators were concerned with the problem of the able-bodied man who wished to work and could not. Ever since the time of Henry VIII, statesmen had been slowly moving towards a policy which implied their recognition of and responsibility for the workless man, who was as much a product of the development of economic freedom as the wealthy merchant. With the statutes of 1597 and 1601, the state definitely took over the responsibility which had once belonged to the manor and craft gild. By their terms, workhouses were to be set up in each parish and furnished with adequate stocks of flax, hemp or other suitable materials. Here were to be set to work those children whose parents were unable to maintain them, and "all such persons married and unmarried having no means to maintain them, who use no ordinary and daily trade of life to get their living by". The impotent poor were to have relief and the wilfully idle to be sent to the House of Correction. National responsibility in its most disagreeable form was recognized by a system of compulsory taxation in addition to the old voluntary contributions. The burden of administration fell primarily on the overseers and churchwardens, but the justices of the peace, acting under the authority of the Council, supervised and nominated the overseers.¹

The success of the Poor Law policy laid down in 1601 depended both on public acquiescence in the ideal of a paternal government, and on an efficient and conscientious system of administration. It seems probable that, from 1587 to 1640, the complete poor law was administered throughout a large area. During this time the relief of the impotent poor was systematized, while it was the only period, Miss Leonard thinks, in which any considerable attempt was made to set the able-bodied poor to work.² The mainspring of this activity was the Privy Council, which, especially during the Eleven Years' Tyranny, was strong enough to enforce an onerous and often unpopular policy.

Between 1605 and 1629 administration was comparatively slack, but from 1629 to 1640 the justices' reports bear evidence of greatly increased activity, especially in connection with the relief of the unemployed.³ The Council often interfered directly with employers when the workmen's interests were threatened. In 1631, when the weavers complained that wages had been reduced, the rate was fixed by an order in Council, and in 1636 Charles issued Letters Patent fixing the length of the reel and ordering that all wages should be raised in proportion.⁴ Again, in 1637, a manufacturer who had made his workmen accept cloth instead of wages during a time of depression was severely punished by the Council.⁵

There is little evidence that men rebelled openly against this aspect of Stuart paternalism, but it is clear that many of its implications were entirely opposed to the doctrines of individual right and the sanctity of the common law which were becoming prevalent. With the outbreak of civil war, traditional ideals and established administration were rudely shaken, and it rested with the Interregnum Parliaments to determine how far the old methods of poor relief should be maintained. A petition from the inhabitants of London, presented to the Lords in 1641, indicates the breach which had been made in social administration by the abolition of the Star Chamber and the fall of conciliar government. The petitioners pointed out that various decrees and proclamations had been made from time to time for the relief of the poor and the prevention of infection, but, since the Star Chamber had been dissolved, the question had arisen as to how far these orders could be carried out.⁶

One of the first effects of the Civil War was to increase the need for a vigorous Poor Law policy.⁷ Disorganization of trade and industry, war-profiteering, devastation caused by the troops, and the burden imposed by wounded soldiers and their families all helped to throng the country with workless men. While the prosperous merchant might seize the chance to fish in troubled waters, the small craftsman or labourer could only struggle to prevent their closing over his head. In 1641, several petitions were presented to Parliament, complaining that the decay of trade was so great "that your petitioners are utterly impoverished and our miseries growne insupportable, we having already spent all that little meanes which we had formerly by God's blessing and our great labour obtained; and many of us had not, nor can we tell where to get bread to sustain ourselves and families."⁸

Those who call themselves the "lowest members of the City of London" describe the terrible misery caused by the deadness of trade, and urge Parliament to take strong measures to remedy it, "for if these things be any longer suspended they will force your petitioners to extremities not fit to be named, and to make good that saying That necessity hath no Law."⁹ Distress was as prevalent in the counties as in London. Mr. Grimston, who could not be accused of undue sympathy with the lower orders, reported to the Parliament in 1642 that he had received petitions from the knights and gentry of Essex and from the borough of Colchester, stating that large numbers of those engaged in the clothing trade had been thrown out of work. Some had betaken themselves to discreditable or overstocked occupations, while the poorer sort were forced to beg or live on the parish.¹⁰ In October, 1642, the House received information from some of its members of the "great Increase of Poor within the Town of Manchester, and other several Places in Lancashire, by reason of the unavoidable Decay of Trade occasioned by the unhappy Distractions of these Times; and that the Justices of the Peace who were formerly of great use in these Parts, have been lately without any just Cause appearing displaced". The Commons ordered the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster to issue commissions of the peace to various gentlemen, and not to discharge them from executing the same till the House gave leave.¹¹ In 1649, the poor of Lancashire were still suffering from the effects of the wars. A petition of that date declared that it would "melt any good heart to see the numerous swarms of begging poor, and the many families that pine away at home not having the faces to beg". The towns of Wigan and Ashton were said to be in a specially bad state. In one of them, there were 2,000 poor who for three months had had no relief, owing to the fact that there was no one to fill the office of justice of the peace, and no one to contribute to their support, "most men's Estates being much drained by the Wars and now almost quite exhausted by the present scarcity . . . There is no bonds to keep in the infected, hunger-starved Poore, whose breaking out jeopardeth all the neighbourhood."¹² In Liverpool, the growing numbers of the poor led the town authorities to adopt an increasingly severe policy. In December, 1649, it was ordered that four of the Councillors should go through the town, take note of all strangers and poor people, and send them away to their places of birth or last settlement. Two

months later, it was announced that, since the town was a garrison, the influx of poor people should be kept out with the assistance of the Governor and soldiers.¹³

Increased taxation weighed heavily on men who were suffering from unemployment and high prices. Whitelocke received in 1649 two letters from the North, one of which stated that the distress caused by high taxes was so great that some of the poorest inhabitants threatened to abandon their homes and wives and children to the doubtful mercies of the gentry, declaring that if an army of Turks came to their relief they would welcome them.¹⁴ The other letter stated that many in Cumberland and Westmoreland had died of starvation on the highways, while others had deserted their homes and travelled with their families to other parts, vainly seeking relief.¹⁵

Some writers objected to the excise on the ground that it laid unfair burdens on the poor. Under the old system of taxation, the poorer classes had usually been exempt, except for such duties as they paid on imported commodities. This exemption was due ultimately to a theory of society which was concerned with groups which exercised varying functions rather than with individuals possessing equal rights. According to this theory, the poor fulfilled their obligation to the state by working, and were therefore excused from taxation.¹⁶ During the Commonwealth, a new view of society developed, and the idea arose that, since everyone received protection of their rights from the state, they should all contribute directly to its support.¹⁷ Those who advocated the excise declared that it levied a just and proportionate burden on all, but conservative writers objected that this "equality" was merely superficial. In practice, the poor suffered far more than the rich, for "there are more great families of the poor than the rich . . . No man pays according to his estate, but most according to their necessities."¹⁸ In 1649, the Common Council of the City declared, "We know it to be just that he that is worth £1,000 should be rated ten times as much as he that is worth £100 . . . and he that hath the greatest estate hath the greatest advantage by this Rule of proportion." They went on to describe how "poor people of small estates" had been overrated, while the rich had got off cheaply, and how, when they had protested against this injustice, the Mayor had rebuked them.¹⁹ The Government seems to have recognized that the poor might come off badly under a system of

"equality", for in February, 1647, the Excise Committee was ordered to take into consideration the further relief of the poor in the matter of excise.²⁰

In 1644, a writer called L. Lee published a pamphlet dealing with poor relief, which laid special emphasis on the way in which the war had aggravated all problems of poverty and vagrancy. "Such persons as live idly out of any calling," he says, "are ulcers in a Commonwealth, oppressors of a State, and impoverishers of a kingdome. And herein is this great City mightily oppressed: for many years since, the number of the poore was exceeding great; and now of late especially since these unnaturall warres began, there are multitudes of poore lately sprung up whose miseries are many." The poor can be divided into two main classes, the indigent poor, who are always with us, and the "additional poor" who have lately sprung up as a result of the wars. The latter consist of the unemployed, those who have lost their estates in the country and have fled to London, widows whose husbands have been killed in the war, and wounded soldiers who are disabled from doing their ordinary work.²¹

While the number of unemployed and paupers increased, the machinery for dealing with them was less adequate than before. The reports of the four great London hospitals during the years 1641 to 1655 furnish definite evidence of the effect of the wars on charitable institutions.²² In every case, the numbers which they were able to maintain decreased considerably from 1647-9, and only rose to something like their old proportions in 1655. There were 1,122 cured at St. Bartholomew's in 1644, but in 1645 the number dropped to 796 and kept below the thousand till 1650, when it rose to 1083 and increased in 1655 to 1,154. In 1644 there were 1,063 cured at St. Thomas's, but from then onwards till 1655 the number kept below the thousand. Those maintained in the hospital decreased from 309 in 1641 to 265 in 1644, and even by 1655 they had not risen above 249. At Christ's, the number of children maintained in 1641 was 926, but by 1647 it had dropped to 597 and did not recover its old proportions till 1655, when it reached 948. The number of inmates of this hospital who were "apprenticed, discharged or dead" fell steadily during these years. In 1644, the number was 100 and in 1645 it was 133, but after this it kept steadily below the hundred and even in 1655 only reached 68. Since it is unlikely that the death rate decreased or that the hospital was reluctant to discharge its inmates, it seems

probable that slackness or difficulty in apprenticing pauper children was the main cause of this fall in numbers. Despite the constant outcries against vagrants, the numbers of those brought to Bridewell decreased considerably during the decade 1645-55. In 1644, 1,128 were brought there, but by 1649 the figures fell to 521 and by 1655 had only reached 688.

Statements issued by the hospitals make it clear that this falling off in their activities was due to the war. Christ's declared in 1644 that "in respect of the troubles of the times" its revenues had greatly decreased. Private benevolences and legacies had stopped coming in, rents and revenues were not regularly paid, while the loss of the "hallage" on cloth and other goods normally brought to Blackwell Hall was a very serious matter. As a result of its insecure position, the Hospital had not been able to take in any children for two years past.²³ Bridewell reported that its numbers had been swollen by Cavaliers and other wandering soldiers, many of whom had cost the institution large sums in clothing, sick diet and surgery.²⁴ In 1647, Christ's added to its troubles the vexatious billeting and pillaging of the armies, which made it difficult for the Hospital's tenants to pay their rents.²⁵ In 1648 their position was no better, yet they stated that within the last two years 280 children had been admitted, "by reason of these hard times, the great number of poor suiters and their extreme necessities, which number of Children now upon present charge is more than the Hospitall is well able to maintaine, unlesse it please the Lord the times become better and that charity doe more increase."²⁶ This appeal met with little response, for in 1649 the hospital again complained that "in respect of the present troubles of the times (which hath continued for divers years past) the meanes of the said Hospitall hath many wayes failed" Yet, in consideration of their great need, 447 children have been admitted to Christ's within the last three years.²⁷ In 1653 the hospital still felt overburdened, since it "hath divers wayes fallen short of meanes formerly Received, viz. heretofore many have given Monies privately, others very bountifull at their Deaths; And severall Parishes in London have sent in large Contributions, and now but one that sends anything at all" Thus, the hospital's revenue does not meet half its charges.²⁸

These complaints of diminishing revenue were not groundless, for as early as 1644 they forced themselves on the attention of a preoccupied Parliament. By an ordinance of

that year, the hospitals were freed from all assessments or taxes, the preamble stating that the Mayor and citizens had witnessed that their incomes were much decayed by reason of the wars. Legacies and charitable gifts had fallen off, and, in addition, the tenants of the hospitals' lands, both near London and further afield, were so much impoverished by the burden of the armies and other exactions that they were unable to pay their rents.²⁹

Contemporary literature agrees with official reports in bewailing the sad case of the poor. One writer declares in 1648 that charity has become so slender that, without some speedy remedy, many thousands will die in the streets for want of food. He rebukes Parliament for the deaf ear which it turns to all complaints. " . . . You may be accounted the greater Tyrants by your insulting and domineering over us the poorer sort of People, after you have almost ruined many gallant Gentlemen and their Families, who we are confident would with large extent of their Charities have relieved some of our indigencies . . ." ³⁰ Another pamphleteer appealed to the rich to come to the rescue of the poor, who required more charity than in normal times, because of the dearness of provisions.³¹ J. Cooke, writing in 1648, said there was never more need to make provision for the poor, yet, with the rise in prices, there was a general desire to cut down expenses and they were forgotten.³² Hartlib told how there was a rumour that some poor families had been so hungry that they had been driven to eating beasts' blood and brewers' grain.³³

To make matters worse, the London parochial authorities seem to have taken full advantage of the slackening of superior control. A dialogue between two churchwardens ("one of them being an honest man and that's a wonder") gives "Mr. Coney-wool" a chance to explain the means by which he made his fortune. He attributes his fall from grace to an ancient and all-sufficient cause, for he took office to satisfy his wife's ambitions and to enable himself to pay for her "taffeta Pettycoates, and that last Gorget". The experiment fully justifies itself. When his parishioners lay in a stock of wool to employ the poor during a hard winter, he appropriates it to himself and sells it to the poor at a profit of 6*d.* to 7*d.* a bushel. Unfortunately for enterprising men such as himself, the rates have to be honestly distributed, as the poor have some idea how much they amount to, but this hardship is mitigated by the equal

division of the money gathered on communion days. Neither the defrauded poor nor the parishioners dare grumble, for the churchwarden has another string to his bow in his monopoly of coneywool. "And should they mutter at my equall share or weeke's allowance from the Poore-man's box, I'd so torment them with my Coniwool there should not be a castor in the kingdome but what my shop should utter." At first, Coney-wool refuses to acknowledge that he has been in the wrong. He says: "Is it not just that everyone should live by his calling . . . shall a man have a place and shall he not make a benefit by it?"³⁴ In another pamphlet, a collector for the poor describes how he has exploited his office. He makes a judicious show of charity, for "knavery undiscovered is as good as the best charity especially when we thrive by it". When he buys coal for the poor he makes a profit of seven shillings on each cauldron, and the money that is gathered on fast and communion days warms the stomachs of the Elders and churchwardens. All this is quite natural, "for alack neighbour, what is an office worth if we get not by it?"³⁵

The breakdown of Poor Law administration, due to wartime conditions and official neglect,³⁶ was by no means confined to London, for the county records all tell variations of the same story. Sometimes there were complaints that hospitals and Houses of Correction had been allowed to fall into decay. Thus in 1646, the Somerset justices ordered that the House of Correction at Shepton Mallett, "which for a long time by reason of the .present sad distractions hath layen unregarded," should be put into repair and that tools for employing the poor should be provided.³⁷ Later in the same year, the justices, "findinge that the hospitalls and spittles within the County have beene of late (by reason of the presente distraccons) much neglected to the greate aggrievaunce of the poore people of and belonging to the same," appointed two hospital treasurers for the county and ordered the constables to collect all arrears.³⁸ More numerous were the complaints of official neglect and mal-administration. There were several instances of poor children being committed to the charge of some inhabitant and then forgotten. In Somerset, a poor child had been entrusted to R. Harris's keeping on condition he was paid 12*d.* weekly. At first this sum was duly paid, "but sithence deteyned by the now overseers there by the space of 44 weekes . . ."³⁹ Several inhabitants of Stondon in Hertfordshire told the

justices that they had kept parish children but could get no pay from the town for their services.⁴⁰ At the Easter sessions of 1648, R. Bennet told the Derbyshire justices that he had kept for seven years the lame child of a Royalist who took up arms in 1641. The overseers had promised to pay him 8*d.* a week, but they gave him this sum only for the first nine weeks. There was a long interval till 1648 when he received nothing at all, and then he was given seven shillings.⁴¹ The hospitals suffered from the same negligence in financial matters. In 1647, the poor people of Glaston hospital in Somerset told the justices that their accustomed pay from the county treasurers had been kept back for three years past, "wherby their distresse is very greivous in regard of the greate prizes of all sorts of Corne."⁴² The inmates of Langport Westover hospital told the same story,⁴³ and the poor people of the hospital at Brewton, Somerset, said that for over two years they had received only a quarter of the money due to them.⁴⁴ Taxpayers and officials alike were negligent and corrupt in the matter of assessments. In 1649, the churchwardens and overseers of a Somerset parish brought a complaint against their predecessors of 1645 for neglecting the poor and refusing to give in their accounts.⁴⁵ Again, in 1647 "great complaints" were made to the justices of the neglect which constables and churchwardens displayed in collecting and paying in maimed soldiers' and hospital money, and likewise of the refractoriness of certain persons who refused to pay their rates.⁴⁶ A particularly serious complaint came from the churchwardens of Othery, Somerset, who stated that many of their parishioners refused altogether to pay their legal assessments.⁴⁷

This breakdown of administration was not confined to one part of England, for similar reports come from the Yorkshire parishes. In 1640, the overseers of two North Riding villages were presented for refusing to make out their accounts.⁴⁸ In 1641, the Carlton overseers were presented for not paying relief to a poor man according to the justices' orders,⁴⁹ while a year later E. Wise, of Wytherholme, "gentleman," had to answer for his refusal to pay eight shillings a week to a poor man.⁵⁰ At New Malton in 1647, there was a general complaint that the parochial officers of various North Riding parishes had large sums of money in their hands which should have been employed for purposes of poor relief, and the Court thereupon ordered that such

offenders must at once send in their accounts.⁵¹ A warrant was issued against the overseers of Carleton Hustlewaite for contempt of an order of Quarter Sessions, and also for neglect of a warrant to find home and maintenance for two poor persons.⁵² In 1650, the churchwardens and overseers of Askrigg were accused of retaining a large sum of money due to the poor, and were ordered by the justices to make out their accounts and pay what money they had in hand.⁵³ The West Riding printed records cover only the first two years of the Interregnum period, but even in this short time there is evidence of the same maladministration which affected the North Riding. S. Wortley, of Swinton, gentleman, flatly refused to pay assessments to the constables,⁵⁴ and in the autumn of 1640 his example was followed by several others.⁵⁵ In 1641, an overseer of Stainforth was accused of "contemptuously and wilfully" refusing for the last two years to give account of the money he had received and disbursed.⁵⁶ At the same time, the inhabitants of the various townships within Staincross wapentake were reminded that they had already been told to pay up their assessments. But "now forasmuch as divers churchwardens and overseers of the poore there doe contemptuously refuse to pay the said assessments," it was ordered that the constables should arrest all such defaulters and bring them before the judges to answer for their conduct.⁵⁷ At Tickhill, both officials and inhabitants were in a state of revolt, for while the parishioners refused to pay assessments, the constables refused to account for the money which they had collected.⁵⁸

Though the evidence for the breakdown of administration is particularly weighty in Somerset and Yorkshire, there are in the records of other counties indications of a similar state of affairs. In Northamptonshire, the overseers of two boroughs neglected to give in their accounts,⁵⁹ and in Shropshire two men were accused of retaining £40 and £20 respectively which they ought to have handed over to the poor.⁶⁰ The people of Derbyshire made several complaints in 1649 of heavy assessments, and one constable petitioned for a warrant of distress to enforce overdue payments.⁶¹ Even the justices seem to have been infected by the general outbreak of slackness and corruption. In 1656, the Council received complaints against a certain John Hobson, who had taken several fines belonging to the poor.⁶² A pamphleteer went so far as to declare that "one justice gave in an account of the poor's money £500 short, this can be proved".⁶³

Though less evidence is available of the breakdown of Poor Law administration in the provincial towns, it is probable that they were affected, in some degree, by the same difficulties which existed in London and the counties. The accounts of the Leicester chamberlain certainly point in this direction. For the year 1642-3, the accounts for the pay of hospital money were full, but in 1644-5 the pay as a whole had very much diminished, and certain items were not accounted for, while by 1645-6 hospital money had dropped out altogether.⁶⁴ In 1650, the Leicester authorities complained that the rents of the Newark hospital had been unpaid for two years, and that, during this time, the Corporation had had to provide for 112 old people.⁶⁵ The Council of State wrote to the Mayor of Portsmouth in 1651, saying that they were told that "the poor very much increase in your town and that no care is taken for their employment". Since Portsmouth was a garrison town, this neglect was particularly serious and should be repaired at once.⁶⁶ The reluctance to accept municipal office, which was apparent in several towns at this time, boded ill for an efficient and continuous administration of poor relief. At Reading, various officials were dismissed for "long absence and neglect in givinge any attendance at the Hall",⁶⁷ while by 1652 the Orford government had been relegated to the youth of the town by their disillusioned elders. In that year, a youth of twenty was elected Mayor and a year later the same experiment was repeated.⁶⁸ When Sir R. Jackson, of Berwick, left £50 in 1648 to found a House of Correction, the Corporation decided to apply for a licence to use the money to employ the impotent poor, "the poverty of the place being extraordinarily increased in regard of the several governments it has of late been under."⁶⁹

The trustees and governors of charitable institutions were more busily engaged at this time in lining their own pockets than in providing for the poor. The maladministration of hospital revenues was an old trouble, for as early as the reign of Henry V it had been necessary to pass a statute to prevent the funds being diverted from their proper purposes.⁷⁰ The confusion created by the Civil Wars aggravated an existing evil, and when in 1656 a Bill for settling the affairs of Wigston's Hospital at Leicester was read, Sir W. Strickland declared that "there is not a greater grievance in England than the abuse of Hospitals". Major Audley added, "it is truly said that since Popery was

abolished, Charity has left the land ; and what is the reason but the changing of the foundation. Where they are merely superstitious I would have them reformed but not taken away.”⁷¹ Abuses in hospital administration may have been increased by changes in their management, but as early as 1641 the Lords were considering an act for their “better maintenance”.⁷² In 1645, the Commons ordered the Committee for Maimed Soldiers to consider the foundations of hospitals in and near London, and discover if they were being used according to the intent of their founders. They were to redress abuses and see that the poorest and most necessitous persons were relieved.⁷³ Later in the year, the County Committees were told to examine the foundations of the hospitals in their respective areas and the abuses practised in placing inmates therein. They were to call the treasurers to account, and were “with all convenient speed, from time to time, to represent the said Abuses and Defects”.⁷⁴ In January, 1648, the Committee for Hospitals was revived,⁷⁵ and in 1649 it was ordered to bring in a Bill for regulating hospitals and was directed to examine complaints from particular institutions.⁷⁶ A Bill for the better distribution of hospital revenues was ordered to be read a second time in November, 1656, but apparently it never passed into law.⁷⁷ Probably the most successful effort to deal with the problem was the commission issued to the Commissioners for Charitable Uses. They received special powers from the Protector, “for redressing of the mis-employment and concealing of Lands, Goods and Stocks of Money heretofore given to Charitable uses,” and all poor people who thought they had been defrauded were to report to the commissioners.⁷⁸

Particular foundations suffered from fraud on the part of their trustees. The tenants of Wigston’s Hospital at Leicester declared that, whereas it was clear that the Hospital’s revenue was intended for charitable uses, those in authority had been guilty of so much slackness and corruption that the poor had been neglected and the tenants oppressed by heavy fines, “and yet noe members of the hospitall have beene enriched thereby unless the Masters have . . .”⁷⁹ The trustees were not the only villains in the piece, for when they called Mr. Lee, the treasurer, before them he refused to produce his accounts.⁸⁰ In 1656, the Master, “confrater” and poor of the hospital petitioned the Council of State to appoint a commission to remedy its abuses.⁸¹ A Bill for

settling the government of the hospital was read a second time, but the Solicitor-General criticized the measure on the grounds that it "will not do the regulation you intend. This is but the changing of hands. You take away His Highness's right in disposing of the master's place, and give it to the town of Leicester."⁸² In the case of Chester Hospital, the Commons decided to grant its management to the town authorities,⁸³ in the hope that they would be an improvement on the old masters, who were accused of neglect and corruption.⁸⁴ At Chichester, a small hospital which had formerly been under the control of the Dean and Chapter was handed over to the town government in answer to its petition.⁸⁵

(II) EMERGENCY MEASURES

(a) RELIEF OF WOUNDED SOLDIERS

After the outbreak of war, problems of poverty and unemployment were greatly aggravated by the necessity of providing for wounded soldiers and their families. A series of ordinances was passed, beginning with that of 1642, in which it was stated that Parliament would provide adequate maintenance for those who were wounded in its service, and would take the estates, wives and children of the slain into its protection.⁸⁶ Six months later, it became apparent that the burden which Parliament had promised to shoulder was too heavy for it to bear, and an ordinance of March, 1643, declared that, though the Lords and Commons had relieved many in London, they found "that that course cannot be held for any continuance of time without many inconveniences". They had therefore decided that the parish in which a slain or wounded soldier had last lived was responsible for providing a "competent sum of money" for the soldier, or for his widow and children. Assessments were to be made by the churchwardens, collectors for the poor, constables or tything men.⁸⁷ In October, 1643, another experiment in rating was tried for six months. Wounded soldiers and their relations were to be provided for out of rates levied upon each county in accordance with its capacity, the High Constables meeting to proportion the sums raised.⁸⁸ By an ordinance of May, 1647, the older system of parochial assessments was revived. Every parish was to be charged weekly according to the rate at which it had been assessed by the statute of 43 Elizabeth, and if necessary a further

sum, not above two and sixpence or less than threepence for each parish, could be levied by the justices in Quarter Sessions. The Treasurers for Maimed Soldiers, who were appointed by the justices under the statute of 1601, were to receive this money and pay it out to those who were eligible for relief. Each disabled soldier was to go to the place where he was last settled with a certificate from his Captain, testifying to the fact of his service and injury, which he was then to take to the justices of the county. After examining the validity of this certificate, the justices were to assign temporary relief till the next Quarter Sessions, when a yearly pension would be granted.⁸⁹

London suffered specially from the influx of wounded soldiers, and various orders and grants were made to relieve the strain. In April, 1643, the Commons ordered that a general collection for wounded soldiers should be made in every parish mentioned in the Weekly Bills of Mortality and in Middlesex and Surrey,⁹⁰ and in August this order was repeated.⁹¹ The reports of the London Hospitals show that provision for wounded soldiers was one of their main charges,⁹² and in 1645 the Lords took pity on them. It was stated that the men's "great Charges" had far exceeded the money set aside for their use, large sums being due for medical attendance and other necessities. To enable the hospitals to carry on their work, the Lords ordered that £1,200 should be paid to the Treasurer for Maimed Soldiers.⁹³ In 1647, the Lords and Commons were told that both wounded soldiers and their widows were in a state of distress, and they accordingly decided to devote to their use the fines for non-payment of the excise and an eighth part of the additional excise.⁹⁴

It has not been possible to collect much evidence of the way in which the various orders for the relief of soldiers were administered. Their execution would involve much of the justices' time and the counties' money. Some of the county records contain indications of the justices' activity, and an entry in the Nottinghamshire records mentions that the amount expended on pensions in 1654 was £73 10s. The burden of maintaining wounded soldiers in this county was said to be heavy, "the County Stock was soe small and ye pencons soe many." A widow complained that her pension had been reduced by the authorities, and in 1657 it was stated that, since the pension money at present collected was insufficient and to make an increased assessment

would be "inconvenient", it had been decided to appropriate to the Treasurers for Maimed Soldiers the salary hitherto assigned to the marshals.⁹⁵ The Corporation of Reading declared in 1652 that, in view of the heavy expenditure on the relief of maimed soldiers, a motion should be carried at the next sessions for the county to have an allowance from the state.⁹⁶ It is not surprising that the Lords stated in 1647 that the local administration had failed to meet the extra strain imposed upon it. Despite much good legislation on the subject of wounded soldiers, "there hath not been an answerable Effect, through the Neglect and Default (as is complained) of the Justices of Peace, in their several Counties, not putting their Power by the said Statute and Ordinances into speedy Execution."⁹⁷

(b) PROVISION OF CORN AND COAL

It was no new departure for the Government and municipalities to provide the poor with the necessities of life during a time of special dearth or hardship. Such provision was not secured by doles or free distribution of food, but by regulating the rates and conditions of sale, and sometimes by selling to the poor at reduced prices. Before 1642, the authorities were concerned chiefly with maintaining a plentiful corn supply, although in James I's reign the City received permission to import 4,000 cauldrons of sea-coal duty free to supply the poor.⁹⁸ With the outbreak of the Civil Wars, one of the most difficult problems which the Government had to face was that of providing London with fuel.

Though contemporaries laid much stress on the evils brought about by prohibiting trade with Newcastle in 1643, the coal question began before and continued after that date. Already in January, 1641, the Lords had begun to investigate the reason for rising prices. On 8th January, they ordered that the Lord Mayor, Recorder and Sheriffs, together with some justices of the peace from Middlesex, Westminster and Surrey, should survey all wharves and store-places and attempt to trace the cause of the excessive rates demanded for coal.⁹⁹ The next day the investigators appeared to give the results of their inquiries. "... And the Reason as they for the present do conceive, of the excessive Prices of Coals, is an Agreement and Combination made between the Masters of the Ships and Merchants of Coals and Wood-mongers, taking a Pretence from the present Troubles at

Newcastle." The Westminster justices, who were called upon next, thought that the coal difficulty had come about through a combination of the colliers, lightermen and wharfingers. When the Middlesex and Surrey justices were called upon, they asked for more time in which to make their report, and were granted a few days in which to draw up a report of the store of coals and wood in every wharf within their liberties. The justices for Kent and the City government were told to send in similar information, and, in addition, the latter body was to investigate the price of coal at Newcastle. The City Recorder was to attend the Lords' Committee for Trade to inform them what power the Lord Mayor possessed to fix the prices of coal and wood, and the whole question of the fuel supply was referred to this committee for further consideration.¹⁰⁰

On 13th January, the City authorities reported that, in accordance with their instructions, they had searched all the store-places within their jurisdictions, and found that they contained 2,596 cauldrons of coal and 17,958 loads of wood, which was a very small proportion of the normal supplies. To keep prices at a reasonable level, they recommended, in the first place, that free trade should be substituted for the control of the "new Corporation of Coal Merchants".¹⁰¹ They had found that the price paid for a Newcastle cauldron of coal (which was supposed to be equal to one and a half cauldrons of the London measure) was eleven shillings, the cost of lading amounting to 12*d.* a cauldron. As to the excessive price of wood, they considered that this was due to woodmongers and other outsiders buying it up before it came into the market. The Recorder was then asked what power the Lord Mayor had to set rates on wood and coal, and replied that, though the Lord Mayor had made many proclamations to this purpose, he could not say what might be done *de jure*. The whole question of fuel provision was referred once more to the Committee for Trade, and the Mayor and Sheriffs were ordered to find out the prices of coal at Newcastle, and to discover the names of the wharfingers and regrators who were combining to raise prices.¹⁰²

During the first months of the year 1643, the coal situation became complicated by Parliament's decision to stop all trade with Newcastle. The Lords viewed this development with apprehension, and in January they resolved to hold a conference with the Commons to consider whether the proposed ordinance might not have the undesired effect of

permanently diverting the coal trade from Newcastle. In addition, they feared that it would cause an immediate rise in London prices, and they doubted whether the city would have a sufficient store of coal in hand to enable it to bear the strain.¹⁰³ Two days later, a report of the conference appeared, and it showed that the Lords had been persuaded to withdraw their protests. It was stated that the Newcastle coal pits would undoubtedly recover, "as it was in the Cessation of Trade at the Scotts first coming hither, and Men for their own Gain will keep them up." The Lord Mayor had reported that there was enough coal within the city to last five months, but, to guard against the possibility of profiteering, the Commons expressed their willingness to add a clause forbidding coals to be sold at prices exceeding twenty-two shillings a cauldron at the wharf or twenty-four shillings if delivered. The Lords declared that the coal merchants and wharfingers should be made to come before them, to see if "by Consent the Price of Coals may be brought to be sold at reasonable Rates".¹⁰⁴ On the same day, an ordinance prohibiting trade with Newcastle was passed, but in it there is no mention of the rates at which coal should be sold.¹⁰⁵

With the passing of this ordinance, the coal problem entered on an acute stage which lasted even after trade with Newcastle was reopened in 1644.¹⁰⁶ A pamphlet published in 1643 described the situation created by the Newcastle ordinance. Three varieties of coal, Sea Coal, Charcoal and Small Coal, discussed the fate which had overtaken the poor, "who are fearfull they must sit and blow their nailes the rest of this Winter for cold." Sea-Coal declares that he still exists in considerable quantities within the city, and that any falling-off in the number of cauldrons sold is made up for in increased prices. "Some of my customers that deal with me by retaile," he says, "sell mee twopence in a bushell dearer already, and at the Wharfs my prime Chapmen the Woodmongers, begin to put a large value upon mee: so that an ill wind it is that drives nobody to profit . . ." Small Coal warns his brother that "this inhauncing your price already, and the feare that you will daily rise higher and higher begets no small murmures in our City". While all classes are hard hit by this policy of exploitation, it is the poor who suffer the worst hardships and cry out most bitterly against the merchants' "ingrossing the whole store into their hands, and selling them at their own prices, as if there were

a dearth of your commodities within the City, when it is very well knowne there is provision enough of Sea-coale to serve it plentifully without supplies from Newcastle for these twentie month and more . . .”¹⁰⁷ Another pamphleteer, writing a year later, described how “the great want of Fewell for fire, makes many a poor Creature cast about how to passe over this cold Winter to come, but finding small redresse for soe cruell an enemy as the cold, makes some turn Thieves that never stole before . . . all to keep cold Winter away . . .”¹⁰⁸

The coal profiteer seems to have carried on his operations on a large scale, and a description of his methods in the 'fifties of the seventeenth century shows that the age was by no means ignorant of the more artistic methods of rigging the market. First of all, says a pamphleteer, gloomy weather forecasts are circulated. Then, the carmen go round telling the poor people that a large part of the coal fleet has been lost at sea and that the Dutch are preventing the remainder from moving. They cry with feigned distress, “Alas! would these wars were once done with the Hollander, else wee poore must starve!” Their work is simplified by the fact that the poor are already suffering from the decay of woods, “and that Heaths and Commons in many places of England where the poore people had wont to gather Fearn and Heath and Gosse and Furze are now clean fled and turned into Corne land, so that the poore must burn Coales or starve.” Alarm must be aroused among the rich by more subtle means, and in dealing with them wise merchants make use of their wives. “We teach them, though we need not, to dissemble to give a sigh and say, indeed Sir I am sorry to tell you, wee are very loath to sell any as yet, for our stores are almost spent and the Warres continue, and there were some fifty saile of Colliers ready to go out, but there is an Order from the State to stop them.” Then the rich men’s stewards vie with each other to get the coal, and often pay as much as £5 down by way of a bribe, but they do not get their goods at once, for experience has shown that it is never wise to allow the whole fleet of colliers to land at one time.¹⁰⁹

The activities described in the foregoing pamphlet cannot be ascribed to lack of vigilance on the part of the Government. Almost immediately after the Newcastle ordinance had been passed, it became clear that Parliament would have to adopt a policy of definite regulation. The *Perfect Diurnall* reported

that a complaint had been made to the Commons that, since the stoppage of trade with Newcastle, the price of coal had risen from twenty-two to thirty-four shillings a cauldron, whereupon the Commons, having been told that there was enough coal in London to last the city for three months, agreed that speedy measures should be taken for setting a definite price on coals.¹¹⁰ An ordinance of February, 1643, confirms this report. It stated that information had been received that the woodmongers, wharfingers and other sellers of Newcastle coal in London, taking advantage of the ordinance forbidding trade with Newcastle, had been charging unreasonable and excessive rates, to the great oppression of all poor people in the city. The Commons had directed the Lord Mayor to consider what was a reasonable price, and he had reported that twenty-two shillings at the wharf was a fair rate, but, in order to encourage traders, twelve pence more a cauldron might be allowed during the winter. The ordinance therefore provided that no one should sell coal at a price exceeding twenty-three shillings until 1st April, when the maximum rate was to fall to twenty shillings. Both the City authorities and the justices were to see that this ordinance was executed and to punish transgressors.¹¹¹

This piece of legislation did not meet with conspicuous success. In June, 1643, the Commons stated that, despite the statutory regulation, "it is informed that the said Masters and Owners, taking Advantage of the Times, and coveting excessive Gains, have sold their Coals at far greater Prices." The Lord Mayor was therefore ordered to appoint "Officers of Trust" to go on board the ships and see that all coal was sold at the fixed rates. They were also to see that the coals were not sold to woodmongers, chandlers or other dealers, "but unto the Poor and unto Housekeepers, and those of the meaner Sort," no one being allowed to have more than one cauldron. Overseers for the poor might make provision of coal for the winter in such quantities as the Lord Mayor thought advisable. These rules were to apply not only to London, but to all towns which imported Newcastle coals.¹¹² A year later, the Commons were still grappling with the problem. In the summer of 1644 the price of coal was fixed for six months, this time at fourteen shillings for the best coal and twelve shillings for the inferior sort. No coal was to be exported without leave of Parliament.¹¹³ Again, in the autumn the Recorder was ordered to tell the

Lord Mayor and Aldermen that the House was well aware of the abuses committed by engrossing coals, "to the great Prejudice of the Poor, and the City, notwithstanding the Care of this House in the Regulating this Matter . . ." The Commons added that they were assured of the Lord Mayor's readiness to enforce these regulations and they promised to support his authority, if need should arise.¹¹⁴

By the end of November, 1644, the Newcastle ordinance had been repealed, but regulation was still needed, and the City authorities presented a petition to the Commons desiring them to take some course to provide London with coals on easy terms.¹¹⁵ In 1649, when the effects of the stoppage of the Newcastle trade must have completely worn off, the Commons ordered the Lord Mayor and justices to take care that the poor of London were provided with coal at reasonable rates.¹¹⁶ Three months later, the Lord Mayor was ordered to execute the laws to prevent forestalling in the corn and coal trades, and to consider how it was that coals were not brought into the common pool for the supply of the City. In December, 1652, the Commons directed the Lord Mayor and Aldermen to examine "how the Price of Coals is raised to such extraordinary Rates, and the Abuse therein; and to take an effectual Course for the present Remedy thereof, for the Good of the Poor."¹¹⁷ In January, the Court of Aldermen made a report touching the price of coal, which was referred to the Lord Mayor and the justices for London and Middlesex. These authorities were empowered to order the Grand Jury to inquire what was a "fit and indifferent" price for sea-coals, and, upon their presentment, to see that all woodmongers and coal merchants sold their goods at this rate.¹¹⁸

On other occasions, the Commons attempted to relieve the poor in a more direct fashion by purchasing a special store of coal for their benefit. Thus, in April, 1644, the Mayor was ordered to see that the coals sent up from the Committee with the Scots' army were distributed for the relief of the poor.¹¹⁹ Again, in 1648 it was ordered that £1,000 of the last three months' arrears in the City's assessments should be left in its hands to buy coals for the poor.¹²⁰ The Commons also tried the device of reducing the indirect taxation on coals. In March, 1645, the five shillings duty imposed on every cauldron of coal by the Commissioners of Both Kingdoms was ordered to be taken off.¹²¹ The Committee for the Revenue, having considered a suggestion from the City that four

thousand cauldron of coal should be brought duty free from Newcastle for the poor's benefit, agreed to the proposal in September, 1648.¹²²

In addition to their efforts to provide cheap coal, the Government made some attempts to supply an alternative fuel. An ordinance of 1643 declared that since Newcastle had been captured by the Royalists there had been a serious coal shortage, "the want of which in Winter may prove almost an insupportable misery, especially to the poorer and meaner sort of people unlesse it be opportunely prevented." It was therefore enacted that fellable wood might be cut within three score miles of London, a committee of the Lords and Commons being formed to appoint overseers and generally to superintend the work. Officers were to be empowered to enter and fell wood in the parks and chases belonging to delinquents and to the King, and the fuel thus obtained was designed primarily for distribution among the poor of each parish. When the needs of the poor had been provided for by the churchwardens and overseers, other officials, who were to be named by the committee, might sell the remainder to ordinary citizens at fixed rates, but no woodmonger was to be allowed to engross any of this fuel.¹²³ In 1644, an ordinance was passed with the object of providing turf and peat for London and Westminster. By its terms, the Lord Mayor was ordered to appoint agents to dig for turf on sequestered lands, these agents being empowered to extend their operations to other lands by agreement with the lessee or owner. This fuel was to be disposed of "at such easie and indifferent Rates" as the Common Council of London might fix, and its distribution was to be managed on the lines laid down in the former ordinance for the provision of wood. The terms of this ordinance were to hold good for six months only.¹²⁴ In July, 1644, the Commons ordered that the committee appointed to provide fuel for the City was to confer with the Common Council as to the means and cost of bringing turf and peat from Egham, Wisbeach, and the Isle of Ely.¹²⁵

This attempt to provide London with fuel at reasonable rates was not confined to the central Government. The City authorities not only collaborated in Government schemes, but took up a definite stand of their own on the coal question. In 1644, the Lord Mayor issued a proclamation for bringing fuel into London. He stated that, in view of the pressing necessity of the times, it was advisable "to give encourage-

ment to all those that shall . . . bring Seacoales, Pitcoales or any other manner of Fewell from any part of this Kingdome unto the Port of London, for the use and benefit of the Inhabitants thereof . . . especially of the poore and needy . . .” The Lord Mayor ordered that all persons should be free to sell whatever fuel they brought to London, “and shall be accounted men well-affected to this City”.¹²⁶ To secure sufficient quantities of coal was only half the battle, and there are several references in the Repertories and Journals to the excessive rates at which it was sold.¹²⁷ The Court of Aldermen was informed in 1643 that various traders in sea-coals had lately procured a large stock, and “will not sell the same but at unreasonable prices to the great oppression of the poore sort of people”. The Court ordered a committee to be appointed to find out what amount of coal had been brought into the City, and at what rates it had been sold since the recent ordinance fixing the price of coal.¹²⁸ A year later, the Common Council, taking into consideration “the great necessities and want of fuel in the City”, appointed a committee to consider how provision might best be made.¹²⁹ In October, 1644, the Aldermen endeavoured to turn the poacher into a gamekeeper by ordering the Woodmongers’ Company to inform themselves of any person who bought sea-coal or any other fuel before coming to market, or who was guilty of charging excessive prices. The Company were told to certify the Court in writing of the offenders whom they brought to justice, and were to advise what course might be taken to supply the City with fuel.¹³⁰

Efforts were also made directly to provide the poor with coal. In 1643 and 1645, there is mention of a stock of sea-coals at the Bridgehouse and at Bridewell for the use of the poor,¹³¹ and in 1644 a committee of the Court of Aldermen was appointed to consider how the poor might be provided with coals.¹³² During the same year, the Common Council determined to present a petition to Parliament, begging that a proposed imposition should not be laid on coals, for “the citie in generall and cheifely the poore have indured much hardnes for these two yeares past and still doth for want of coles”.¹³³ Again in 1648, a petition was drafted to protest against the excise on coals and to stress the fact that the burden would fall mainly on the poor. It referred to the “greate increase and miserable condicon of the poore of this cittie occasioned by the extreame decay of

trade . . . want of imployment, scarcitie and dearnes of provisions".¹³⁴

While the attempt to regulate the coal supply was a comparatively new departure, the provision of corn and other victuals had long been regarded as one of the duties of governments and municipalities. As early as Richard II's reign, attempts were made by some Lord Mayors to provide the City with corn during famine years, and in 1520 the Common Council resolved that each City Company should be assessed for a certain quota of corn, the proceeds going to furnish a public granary.¹³⁵ By the seventeenth century, there had developed a regular system of selling to the poor at reduced rates. In addition, the Privy Council intervened, sometimes by seeing that the brewers did not use too much grain, but more often by ordering the justices to force the dealers to sell at moderate prices. Occasionally the wisdom of this policy was questioned, as at Chipping Wycombe, where the Mayor complained that, after the justices' orders had been carried out, only one quarter of the usual quantity of grain was brought to market.¹³⁶ But, on the whole, the policy of paternal regulation which reached its climax during the Eleven Years' Tyranny was accepted as beneficial, and was executed by the justices often in opposition to their own interests.

The outbreak of civil war offered unprecedented scope to the forestallers and engrossers, whose activities had hitherto been cramped by the vigilance of the Council and the justices. Contemporary pamphlets described the way in which men took advantage of the breakdown of regulation. There are, says one writer, three main classes of men who engross corn. The first is the greedy farmer, "withholding it from those who need it to sell it to those who make greater profit by it." Thus, the markets are starved, and it is to be noted that "the markets are the Commons of the common people, and of many who use good hospitality; let them be inclosed, soon will these grow lean. The Markets are their Magazines: if the poore buyers be not there provided, how shall their wants be supplied?" It is impossible for the farmers to justify their action except by arguments "drawne from the common place of their owne profit". The second offender is the covetous merchant who keeps back corn from the markets, often to export it out of the country, and the third class of offenders are the badgers, who carry corn from one place to another. To all this, it may be objected that a man

can do what he likes with his own, but "it is not lawful for thee to do with thine own what thou wilt unless thou wilt do that which is lawful and right".¹³⁷ Another pamphleteer describes a dialogue which takes place between Mr. Hord, the mealman, and Mr. Gripe, the broker. These two recount how they appoint meetings with the farmers who have corn to sell, and who prefer to dispose of it in large quantities rather than to bring it to market. Since very little corn is brought to the markets, the price goes up, "and so," says the mealman, "although we buy reasonable, we sell according to the rate of that day's market for the week following." He and his friends only go into the market occasionally, to pacify the magistrates, for they find it pays better to sell in their own shops, where bad grain can be passed off and no one the wiser.¹³⁸ J. Cooke, writing in 1648, declared that the engrosser was one of the most serious evils of the time, and he insisted that the best way to relieve the poor was by dealing generously with them. "He that will sell so much barley as he can reasonably spare this dear year to poor men for two shillings or two and six a bushel is a more charitable man than he that now and then gives alms to a beggar at his door." According to Cooke, it was impossible to fix a definite price at which corn should be sold, for men would circumvent it by endless devices, and it would tend to hinder contracts. But this was not to say that men might charge what prices they liked, for, though a thing was legally worth what it could be sold for, "in conscience" it was worth no more than the buyer was able to give. Cooke anticipated his opponents' arguments and answered them in no measured language. "But may not I doe with my owne what I list? (sayes the old Cormudgin). No, that thou maist not, thou Devill in the shape of a man, a man may not be drunke with his own wine, nor play the Glutton at his own table . . ." ¹³⁹

In dealing with the corn supply, the Commonwealth Governments kept mainly to the example of their predecessors, though interesting and significant variations occurred. The most urgent necessity was to reduce prices. In February, 1649, the Commons directed a committee to consider how to keep the price of corn and other provisions at reasonable rates,¹⁴⁰ and, a month later, they ordered the justices throughout England and Wales to put the laws against engrossing into execution and to see that all parishes provided stocks of corn and other necessities for the benefit of the poor.¹⁴¹ In April, 1649, an Act for abating the price of victuals was

read twice, amended and recommitted,¹⁴² and, a year later, a similar measure for bringing down the prices of grain and preventing the destruction and forestalling of meal was read twice and recommitted.¹⁴³ This Bill probably became the Act of October, 1650, which stated that there had lately been considerable destruction of wheat and other grain, which was also sold in private houses and shops, instead of being brought into the public market. It was therefore enacted that no person might buy wheat or other grain, with the intention of selling it as meal, without having a licence from the justices. No meal was to be sold in shops or houses, "but onely in the common publique Market-place usual for that purpose . . ." Meal was to be sold exactly as it came from the mill and was not to be subjected to the processes of boulding and sifting. To make the punishment of these and similar offences more certain, transgressors might not obtain a writ of *Certiorari* or *Habeas Corpus*.¹⁴⁴ In 1654, the mealmen petitioned the Protector to modify an Act which not only debarred them from trading in their own shops, but was, they said, a great disadvantage to poor people who had to buy when and where they could. In response to this plea, the Protector decided to allow meal to be sold in shops on any day except market day.¹⁴⁵

Though it is obvious from the foregoing instances that the Interregnum Governments were by no means opposed to a policy of regulation in the corn trade, there are indications of a movement towards a lessening of restrictions. Even before 1640, occasional doubts had been raised as to the benefits conferred by strict regulation, and it was not unnatural that the pressure of wartime necessity should combine with the influence of new economic theories to suggest a temporary modification of the old system. In 1644, the Recorder was told to bring in an ordinance to enable citizens to lay in supplies of corn, always provided that existing legislation was not disregarded.¹⁴⁶ A month later, an ordinance was read twice for bringing corn and grain into the City by citizens and others, "notwithstanding any former Act against Engrossers of Corn."¹⁴⁷ This policy of allowing greater freedom of purchase was probably suggested, or at least endorsed, by the City government.¹⁴⁸

The prevention of exportation in times of scarcity was an obvious way of conserving supplies. In 1643, a committee was appointed to prepare an order for preventing the export of corn, butter, cheese, wool and fullers' earth, and also to

consider how magazines of corn might be provided for the poor. No corn was to be exported in the meantime.¹⁴⁹ As local administration was disorganized during these years, it is doubtful how far such orders would be effective, but the terms of a special licence to export 4,000 quarters of grain indicate that the Government thought, or pretended, that it was making an exception to a general rule.¹⁵⁰ By 1654, the Commons had decided to reconsider this policy. In the October of that year, a committee was appointed to determine how far the export of corn might be encouraged.¹⁵¹ Their report recommended that it should be lawful for any natives of the commonwealth to export wheat and other grain when the price did not exceed the following rates: Wheat 36s. the quarter, rye 24s., barley and malt 20s., peas and beans 18s., and butter 6d. the pound. The committee had also considered the statutes made with regard to the buying and re-sale of wheat and other grains, and they found that liberty might be granted in this respect when wheat was not above 32s. the quarter, and other grain at the prices named in the said statutes.¹⁵² In 1656, an Act was passed which definitely reversed the earlier policy of totally prohibiting export. Since it had been found "that the prosperous Estate of all Islands is very much (under God) maintained and supported by a quick and flourishing Trade, and in a just endeavour and care that the Exportation of the Native Commodities overbalance the Importation of Foreign Commodities, "it was therefore enacted that corn and other grain might be exported when prices did not exceed the following rates:—Wheat 40s. the quarter, rye, peas and beans 24s., barley and malt 20s., and oats 16s."¹⁵³ This Act seems to have been prompted by the influence of mercantilist ideas, but it is likely that its passage was made possible by the fact that the problem of corn supplies had become less acute.

The administration of corn regulations in the counties must have varied widely from place to place, and it is probable that the justices' activity would diminish when once the guiding hand of the Council was removed. But in Somerset and Wiltshire, at least, there were numerous attempts to provide corn for the poor and to put down maltsters. Some of the inhabitants of Westbury in Wiltshire took it upon themselves to rebuke the justices, who had "by the underhand mediating of subtill caterpillars" given malting licences to those who already had enough to live on from their trades. The making of malt was thereupon restrained "on

account of the great scarcity of corn ", and an order was made directing all corn to be brought to the markets, and sold exclusively to the poor until a stated time had elapsed. There follows a long list of maltsters who were suppressed, and of others who were limited as to the amount of malt which they might make up.¹⁵⁴ In 1648, upon " consideration of the great and lamentable cry of poor people in this time of dearth and scarcity ", the justices confirmed an order made for an allowance of barley to be sold at cheaper rates, and added that two pecks out of every sack should be kept for the poor.¹⁵⁵ Later in the year, the Grand Inquest declared that in all places there had been great neglect of the order made for relief of the poor, and therefore directed all maltsters to stop buying barley until after 1st September.¹⁵⁶

The Somerset justices must have been unusually active, or the maltsters unusually numerous, for in this county continuous efforts were made to repress and limit brewing in the interests of the corn supply. It was said that unlicensed alehouses had increased, " whereby the prices of Corn are much inhaunced to the great detriment of the poore in the tyme of dearth and scarcity." The Court therefore ordered that no maltster was to deal with any unlicensed alehouse, on pain of suspension for three years.¹⁵⁷ This order does not seem to have been very effective, for the Court soon returned to the attack. They stated that many complaints had been received as to the serious offences committed by maltsters, alehouse-keepers, bakers and engrossers, who raised the price of corn and other victuals " in this time of dearth and scarcity ", and they therefore ordered that the sentence against unlicensed alehouses should be put into execution. In addition, the justices were to take an exact account of all the maltsters within their jurisdiction, and those who were able to support themselves apart from their malting were to be restrained from it for one year. Those who continued were to be limited in the amount of malt which they might use. No maltster, badger, or baker was to be allowed to buy corn except in open market.¹⁵⁸ Both these orders were issued in 1647, and again, towards the end of the year, the Court had to complain of the buying up of barley by maltsters, which " in theis tymes of scarcity doth daily enhaunce the price thereof and may probably bringe the price of barly to bee soe high that the poore may not bee able to attayne thereunto and soe must consequently perish or bee reduced to greate want." ¹⁵⁹ In 1649, the Court received a petition from three

hundred inhabitants of the county which emphasized the great dearth of all sorts of grain and victuals, caused by the excessive number of alehouses, forestallers and maltsters. It was ordered that all existing licences should be annulled, while from henceforth no licence should be granted except at the General Sessions or at some special sessions, and then only to inhabitants of market towns, port towns, harbours, landing places and "mineries". As to forestallers and engrossers, the justices were ordered to keep a "special eye" on them and see that they did not go unpunished.¹⁶⁰

The London authorities were concerned chiefly with the Companies' corn supply and with market regulation. The Lord Mayor continually reminded the Master and Wardens of the various Companies to let him know in writing what "quantitye of good and wholesome corne your sayd Companye hath at present in stoare towards the Cittye's provision and in what Granary or place ye same lyeth".¹⁶¹ Sometimes a further admonition was necessary, as when the Lord Mayor said, in 1646, that he had been informed that the Companies were not adequately provided with corn and that what they had was old and musty. He ordered this bad corn to be thrown away, and each Company to lay in its due quota of good corn, so that the combined total might reach ten thousand quarters.¹⁶² It was necessary to regulate the prices at which the Companies' corn was sold. In 1647, the Lord Mayor told the various Aldermen that, "For the better furnishinge of the meale markett within this cittie thereby to pull downe the high rates of meale now sold at and the better to supply and relieve the poore," they were to see that a certain proportion, both of the Companies' store and of the provision which they themselves ought to have made, should be sold to the poor by the half bushel and peck at a maximum price of six shillings the bushel.¹⁶³ In 1650, certain Companies were ordered to send a proportion of corn weekly to the City markets to be sold for the "abatement of prices of Corne for ye Benefit of the poore of this cittye". Seven shillings the bushel was fixed as the maximum price.¹⁶⁴ The Companies seem to have chafed under the burden which these orders laid upon them, for the Lord Mayor complained, in 1654, that their provision of corn was "very much neglected and not that care taken therein as ought to be".¹⁶⁵

There was a growing feeling in the City that the Companies' provision was not by itself adequate to meet the needs of the time. The Common Council declared in 1643

that, after considering the importance of furnishing the City with corn in those distracted times, they had appointed a committee to find out what provision the Companies had made, and also to consider "what further provision of corne is necessarily fitt to be made for the citties use, and use the best meanes they can with country Farmers and others for the further stoaring of this citty with corne".¹⁶⁶ The Court of Aldermen followed suit by appointing a committee to consider how the City might best be furnished with corn and food.¹⁶⁷ In 1644, the Aldermen stated that the Committee of Both Kingdoms advised the City to furnish itself with a greater stock of corn and victual than ever before, "and not to rest in such proporcions as have byn thought sufficient in tymes of peace and hopes of future plenty, and that besides the said publique store all of ability within the citty may bee possessed of a sufficient store for their owne provisions according to the proporcion of their families." The Committee of Both Kingdoms was asked to urge Parliament to ordain that it should be lawful for any citizen to buy corn in any place within or without the country, and to sell it at his own "liberty and pleasure", notwithstanding the restrictions made in former Acts.¹⁶⁸ It is possible that the proposed ordinance of March, 1644, was drafted in response to pressure from the City.¹⁶⁹

Many of the regulations for the corn supply which the City proposed were useless so long as market regulations were disregarded. In 1645, the Common Council considered the draft of an Act to reform the abuses practised in London markets,¹⁷⁰ and in 1646 a proclamation was passed to do away with the "present and growing inconveniences", which had arisen despite good laws. Trouble had been caused through the butchers' stalls getting into the hands of men whose sole object was to make a profit by letting them at high rates. It was therefore decided that the land of Leadenhall market should be taken over by the City, and that no "mere" shopkeeper should be allowed to have a stall. The hours during which markets could be held were to be strictly limited, and "Forasmuch as Markets are most principally intended for the benefitt of housekeepers and those who buy for their own behoofe", private buyers should have the market to themselves after a certain time.¹⁷¹ In 1646, the mealmen complained that their markets had decayed,¹⁷² and a committee was appointed which reported in 1647 that, after calling various witnesses before them, they had come

to the conclusion that no corn chandler or other tradesman should sell meal in his own shop, and that all meal brought to the City of London should be sold in the public markets. By this means, country mealmen would be encouraged, and the markets maintained "for the common use of the Inhabitants of the Citie".¹⁷³ Probably in consequence of this report, the Lord Mayor issued a proclamation forbidding meal to be sold in shops after a certain date.¹⁷⁴ The Aldermen were told in 1647 that it was useless for the Companies' corn to be sold in the public markets, because of the great throng which assembled and the confusion which ensued. Therefore, they ordered a committee to find out the names of those poor who were fit to benefit by the said corn, and to decide what proportion should be sent weekly into every ward to be delivered to them.¹⁷⁵

The confusion from which the markets suffered was due partly to the difficulty of dealing with an ever-growing population and area. An attempt was made to solve this problem by ordering that the west end of St. Paul's, Holborn, Redcross Street, Whitechapel, Smithfield and Tower Hill should be viewed and made into meal markets for the benefit of the suburbs.¹⁷⁶ The Middlesex justices seem to have suggested that additional markets should be set up outside the City, and thereby provoked a violent protest from the Aldermen, who declared that one of their most cherished privileges was that no market should be set up within seven miles of the City. They insisted that, if the proposed markets were established, those in the City would be forestalled, the price of corn would rise and a dearth would follow. The statement that the shutting up of meal shops had rendered new markets necessary was dismissed as false, and the Aldermen suggested that it was the discontented mealmen who were at the bottom of the present agitation.¹⁷⁷

(III) THE DEVELOPMENT OF OPINION

In their attempts to provide for wounded soldiers and to secure an adequate fuel and food supply during the wars, the Interregnum Governments were dealing with exceptional and urgent situations, and it is not surprising that, in the main, their policy followed along lines laid down by their predecessors. But the chief significance of the Interregnum period lies in the changed attitude which was being taken up towards the ever-recurring problems of poverty and vagrancy.

This attitude, together with the conservative opposition to it, is reflected in the abundant pamphlet literature of the time more completely than in the policy of the preoccupied Parliaments.

There is little doubt that, during these years, the mere fact of poverty became more and more to be regarded as in itself disgraceful. A writer who calls himself "H. P.", and is possibly Hugh Peters, describes the cold welcome which his contemporaries extended to the poor man. "Whosoever wanteth money is ever subject to contempt and scorne in the world, let him be furnished with never so good gifts either of body or mind . . . The worst property that poverty hath, it maketh men ridiculous, and scorned, but oftentimes of such as are more to be contemned themselves in regard either of their ignorance or vitious living or uselesse company ; if we do but look back into better and wiser Ages, we shall find poverty, simply in itselfe, never to have been (as nowadays in the last and worst act of Time) esteemed a Vice . . . But, *tempora mutantur*, and in these times we may say with the wise man : My sonne better it is to die then to be poore . . ." All things considered, "H. P." thinks that the only wise course is to make friends with the Mammon of unrighteousness. He gives various examples of the plight of the poor man, and says, "Let these and the like examples then be motives unto all to make much of money, to eat their own bread in their houses, and to be beholden as little as may be to any for their meat . . ." ¹⁷⁸ "H. P." accepts the logic of facts with regret tinged by sarcasm. Most writers, however, welcome the new attitude towards poverty as an indispensable spur to industry. The sufferings of the poor are all for the best, for thus it is brought home to them that "humane Industry is urgently necessary, whereby to shun those mischiefs entailed on want." ¹⁷⁹

Though contemporaries might differ in their attitude to poverty, they were unanimous in stressing the important place which money now occupied in the world. Harrington's theory that power rested ultimately on the ownership of land was hotly contested by M. Wren, who declared that money was the force controlling all human affairs.¹⁸⁰ A broadside published in 1654 portrays the Lady Pecunia riding on a peacock, and being welcomed at the gates of Hell by a lively black devil with a pitchfork. She congratulates herself that she has sent more souls to Hell than were ever conducted by Pluto's fiends, and she claims to be the invisible

power who decides even the issues of wars. Poets alone have escaped her dominion :—

“ Of all men living he cares least for me,
For a rich Poet whose did ever see ?

And so, great Lord, I have no more to say,
All living men but Poets me obey.” ¹⁸¹

Some writers attributed this scorn of poverty and worship of riches to the influence of Puritanism,¹⁸² but whatever its cause, there can be little doubt that the poor suffered from its effects. J. Cooke complained that, while the necessities of the poor had never been greater, “ everyone projects for himself to spend as little as may be, but who takes care for the poor, how shall they be provided for ? ” ¹⁸³ A minister, preaching in 1644, rebuked the large number of men who did not regard poor relief as a duty. “ They think it to be a thing arbitrary, and not necessary, they may do well in giving relieve and they may let it alone and not do amisse ; who shall compell them to give away what is their own ? ” ¹⁸⁴

While all writers agreed that the problem of poverty deserved the gravest attention, the solutions which they proposed were extremely varied. The conservative point of view was represented by J. Cooke, an Anglican and a former member of Charles I's government. Just as Moore traced the evils of enclosure to the selfishness of landlords, so Cooke attributed the growth of poverty to the self interest of engrossers and alehouse keepers. He insisted that it was the magistrates' duty to root out these cancers from the commonwealth. Free competition, looking merely to the dealer's own interest, was denounced. The “ final cause ” of every contract was the enjoyment of God's works “ honestly and profitably, that one man may not be grievous to another . . . ” Side by side with the engrosser stood the alehouse keeper, who not only engrossed the barley which should have gone to feed the poor, but, by his encouragement of drunkenness, was responsible for half the disorders in the state. In enclosure for pasture farming, Cooke saw a third main cause of poverty, for it was responsible for turning men adrift from their homes and occupations and raising the price of corn. He suggested that the justices should be authorized to provide corn for the poor at reasonable rates, and that the unproductive forests should be converted into arable land.

Cooke was a thorough-going conservative in his faith in

the old order and dislike of sweeping reforms. He disdained the Utopian dreams indulged in by Winstanley and Cornelius, and saw no beauty in an ideal society wherein the extremes of riches and poverty would vanish and a community of land and goods take their place. He wished to keep the rich man in his castle while ensuring that the poor man should not knock unanswered at his gate. "I would not be mistaken as if I were an enemy to great estates," he says, "the God of order hath appointed several degrees of men and set them in their several stations, the rich to be liberall to the poore and the poore to be serviceable to the rich . . . I am not of their opinion that drive at a parity to have all men alike, 'tis but a Utopian fiction, the Scripture holds forth no such thing: the poore ye shall have alwayes with you; but there ought not to be a Beggar in England for they live rather like beasts than men." The ideal of service and charity which Cooke held before the owners of property was high, and, with the characteristic weakness of the conservative idealist, he gave little indication of how it was to be attained in a sinful world. He recognized the difficulty of the selfish landlord, without making much attempt to meet it. The contemptuous disapproval which he bestowed upon the parvenu, who refused to shoulder his responsibilities, was really a shelving of the question. "Kings and Potentates, Noblemen and Gentlemen may rejoyce in their great estates, left unto them, and look upon them as tokens of God's love, if they be bountifully minded," he says, "but they may not by the Law of God make it the chiefe end and study of their lives to multiply riches . . ." But for merchants and tradesmen and usurers to gain such vast estates is unwarrantable, for it encourages them to look upon their callings merely as a means to greater riches, instead of as a service to mankind. Nevertheless, Cooke admits that it is becoming increasingly common for the tradesman to turn landed proprietor.¹⁸⁵

S. Richardson and R. Younge are among the few writers who agree with Cooke's view of society and explanation of poverty. Both of them deprecate the way in which men allow their charity to begin and end at home. It must not be forgotten, they say, that no one is the absolute owner of his goods, for "He that is the great Lord and Master of this great family . . . hath ordained all for the common good and commanded them to be communicative".¹⁸⁶ Yet individual interest vies with family ambition in ousting all sense of wider responsibilities.¹⁸⁷ Like Cooke, these writers believe in a

state of ordered inequality, which has been ordained by God to "exercise the divers graces which he hath given to his church and people".¹⁸⁸ But they are uneasily aware that the facts do not square with the theory, and they complain that the triumph of the reformed religion has not brought that increase of practical charity which should have been the natural accompaniment of the added purity of its faith. "The Papists may rise up against many of this generation: It is a sad thing that they should be more forward upon a bad principal than a Christian upon a good one."¹⁸⁹

The weakness of the "functional" view of society, represented by Cooke and Moore, was its failure to assimilate the new theories and, still more, the new facts which after the beginning of the sixteenth century had grown apace. Since they were denied inclusion within the old sphere, they developed in tacit or open defiance of its tenets, and in time evolved an ideal of their own which, with all its faults, had at least the virtue of bearing some relation to existing conditions. By the time of the Commonwealth, men demanded more from their theorists and statesmen than a mere insistence on the *status quo*. Greater influence was exercised by such writers as Samuel Hartlib and Peter Chamberlen, who aimed at curing social evils by the introduction of improved methods of organization. To them, the relief of the poor was not primarily a religious duty and a moral obligation, but an urgent practical necessity, the evasion of which would be followed by disastrous political and economic consequences. Chamberlen pointed out that "the wealth and strength of all Countries are in the poore, for they do all the great and necessary workes, and they make up the maine body and strength of Armies."¹⁹⁰ In these circumstances, it was obvious that poor relief became a matter for public legislation rather than for private benevolence. Hartlib noted that the instability of the political situation made the allegiance of the poor an important factor to be considered by statesmen, for their great numbers would enable them more than to counterbalance the allegiance of the rich.¹⁹¹

The able-bodied, workless man was the crux of the situation, and, whereas Cooke had hoped to meet his case by returning to a system of paternal benevolence and regulation, Hartlib and his friends aimed at perfecting an organization which would teach him to shift for himself. It was not poor relief, so much as instruction in the doctrine and practice

of self-help which the progressive reformers advocated. Balthazar Gerbier declared that, "charity cannot be confined within the walls of hospitals and almshouses, nor under the gowns of a small number of old men or women. That which at present is requisite reflects on a more general good; for as it must extend itself to the relief of the very poorest sort of people, so must it be favourable and beneficial to all necessitous persons whatsoever . . ." Beginners in trade are to receive help, merchants, husbandmen and seamen are to be relieved in times of want, indeed, all those who need assistance in any matter connected with their callings will not seek it in vain.¹⁹² But a general encouragement of thrift was not enough. The poor needed a more definite and sterner training in the economic virtues, and it was here that the workhouse came in as the centre of the organization for inculcating self-help. With Hartlib's enthusiasm for education, it was natural that he should be specially interested in the training of poor children, and he even declared that the whole state could be reformed by the proper instruction of orphans and children belonging to poor and negligent parents.¹⁹³ Little children were to be taught to spin and knit by widows or "ancient maids who are of good report", while the older boys would be instructed in various handicrafts by "such men that lie on charge of their Companies for maintenance".¹⁹⁴ All sorts and conditions of men would be brought to the common workhouse and there set to work under the supervision of a Governor and his officers. To the House of Correction were to be sent the stubborn and deliberate vagabonds, "there to remain in hard work and hard lodging" till they promised amendment. When the lusty beggar was discharged, "he shall not goe whither his lust as the manner is now . . . but shall return to the workhouse from whence he came."¹⁹⁵ In a later pamphlet, Hartlib remarked that the transfer of vagrants to distant parishes did more harm than good, since they often gave false information as to their last place of residence. He now advised that no beggar should be sent anywhere beyond a radius of thirty miles from London, but should either be retained in the House of Correction or sent to the galleys or plantations. Those who lived within the radius should wait in London till the truth of their information had been checked.¹⁹⁶

Efficient administration of the workhouse system depended on the presence of able and conscientious officials, provided

with an adequate revenue. It was essential that overseers and churchwardens should work together, for "the Churchwardens of the place have an equal Authority and Charge with the Overseers of the poor", and any slackness in this respect must be punished.¹⁹⁷ The swarm of vagrants made it equally necessary that marshals and constables should be vigilant in their duties and work in the closest connection with the Governor of the Bridewell.¹⁹⁸ Reform on any large scale was impossible without increased revenues, and several pamphleteers had suggestions to make on this point. It was significant that their commonest proposals were for some form of national and compulsory taxation. Gerbier proposed to augment the poor's funds by imposing something like a luxury tax. All successful merchants who kept country houses on the river were to pay for their indulgence, and "all those who purchase Lands, Houses (especially Merchants and strangers, under what disguised name soever) should contribute towards the said establishment". Those who had ordered gilt coaches would not be allowed to fetch them home from the makers till they had contributed to the same fund, while all who kept a kennel of hounds were to be taxed. The official classes would not escape, for municipal officers, excisemen and lawyers would pay increased taxation.¹⁹⁹ It was appreciated that a man's real property did not represent the sum of his resources, and one writer suggested that "some respect may be had to men's invisible estate of money".²⁰⁰ More general was the opinion that some part of the national revenues should be devoted to the poor. Hartlib thought that half the proceeds from a year's excise should be given over to their maintenance, together with a tenth or twentieth part of the revenue of the Bishops' land.²⁰¹ Other writers advised the appropriation of such "natural" resources as coal mines or waste land.²⁰²

Consideration of the problems of administration led to the conclusion that a system which took the parish as its unit was unsatisfactory, and the pamphlets of the time contain some interesting anticipations of the Union system. Hartlib, writing in 1646, hoped to introduce an improved organization on the basis of the Presbyterian system of church government. All gifts and compulsory levies within a *classis* were to be brought to a bank, and "the Elders to see to the managing of it in every parish within the Class; for some parishes in a Class may have many gifts, and so raise a great stock, there it lyes dead, because they have but

few poor to employ it, other parishes within the Class have many poor and but little stock and therefore many of them go a-begging, but when the parishes joyn together within the Class they will remedy wandering begging".²⁰³ Some interesting proposals were put forward in the *Perfect Diurnall* for June, 1652. This enterprising newspaper stated that, having settled Irish affairs the previous week, it would now proceed to deal with the Poor Law. It pointed out that one of the main defects of the present system lay in the unfitness of the single parish to be a unit of administration. The amount of stock provided in the workhouse was always inadequate, and yet it constituted a greater burden than the parish was able to bear. A scheme was suggested by which workhouses would be erected in three to six places in every county, while financial administration would be centred in one county bank, for thus "the gifts in particular Towns, given for workhouses, though ineffectual in the particular places", could be used effectively for the good of the whole. According to the *Perfect Diurnall*, the other great mistake lay in administering the Poor Law through annually appointed overseers who were mere amateurs, and had "no profit and therefore no care" in their work. To remedy this defect, it was proposed to appoint "constant and skilful overseers, who partly by salary, and partly by income from the work, might thrive on the oversight and allow fit prizes to the people working." The parochial collectors would be left with the comparatively simple duty of providing for the impotent and aged poor. The unpaid amateurs, who had been England's most distinctive contribution to the theory and practice of administration, met with scant praise from the *Perfect Diurnall*. "To call an overseer a yeer to a work he understands not, and which, if he did, cannot be managed without neglect of his calling, which is his livelihood, no marvel if it have no good effect."²⁰⁴

Two schemes stand out from the large number of projects for reducing the growing swarm of paupers and vagrants. T. Laurence, the author of the first, prefaced his pamphlet by the remark that he had employed the poor of Marlborough for twenty-four years, and had seen "much of the ground of their misery and something of the remedy." He anticipated the modern labour exchange by his suggestion of a "poor man's office", where employers, labourers, servants and apprentices might converge to supply each others' needs. Here tradesmen could meet together to equalize the distribu-

tion of business, by those who had more custom than they needed passing it on to those who had too little. The vexed question of domestic service received attention, for the poor man's office was a place "where maids that would or are fit to be Apprentices or Covenant servants, or some as want such, may enquire". It is notable that one of the rules was that "none to be put to service until they be first taught to knit, spin, sew, learn some trade or way of livelihood, lest in after times they can do nothing for themselves." Unlike most of his contemporaries, T. Laurence seems to have realized that the problem of poverty and vagrancy was primarily due to unemployment, and the remedies which he proposed—the bringing together of employers and employed and the prevention of blind alley occupations—were surprisingly modern.²⁰⁵

Peter Chamberlen believed that existing methods of poor relief were doomed to failure both on economic and political grounds. A policy of increased taxation was fatal for any government, for though "none more fond of a King than the English, yet they departed from Him to ease their purses and their Consciences. If they forsook their King will they not forsake their fellow subjects from the same Cause?" The true remedy lay in infusing the unprofitable body of poor relief with the vigorous blood of commercial enterprise. Chamberlen hit on the ingenious notion of forming the poor into a joint stock company, by which means they would be transformed from a bad debt into a valuable asset, for, if 200,000 poor were set to work and cleared £20 a head, it would bring £4,000,000 into the treasury. The initial capital would be supplied by appropriating the various sources of revenue which had lately come into the state's hands and were, by their nature, specially intended for the benefit of the whole nation. Delinquents' estates, for instance, "ever were supposed to be public in being contracted into those hands who were supposed public persons, for public uses." Lands which had already been sold should be repurchased in such a way as not to injure the purchaser, but Chamberlen reminded his readers that the welfare of the poor came before the interest of the property owner, for "duties are above promises, if different or contrary. And it is the very duty of public men to prefer the public before the private . . . The orders and designs of Parliament have not been like the Laws of Medes and Persians. For many urgent necessities have put alteration upon them sundry times." Common

lands were another obvious source of capital for the proposed design, since "they are and ever were used as common and public and the poor have an interest in them already". Drowned lands, and mines which had belonged to the King were to be taken over, since their immediate owners would neither work them nor compound for them. As to the appropriation of public funds for the scheme, no argument was needed, for disbanded soldiers would be among the first to benefit from it, and "it is the very use for which those moneys were pretended, i.e. the payment of soldiers". Chamberlen emphasized the national and public character of the proposed joint stock company, and insisted that, in floating it, the state would not be parting with its possessions but only using them for another purpose, "unless statesmen mean themselves when they speak of the State, as every Bishop was called the Church and every cunning lawyer's title or place the King's." Chamberlen had to defend his scheme against the time-honoured objection that its success would corrupt an already demoralized class. His answer was that, even if he conceded that the poor had a monopoly of wickedness and ingratitude, there could be no better argument for a plan which attempted to reform them. He reminded his readers, however, that the demoralizing effect of acquiring prosperity might with equal justice be pointed out to those who already were in possession of it. Unlike Moore, Chamberlen could not accept the belief that the rich and the poor had been called to their respective positions by divine ordinance. "Is there a necessity in nature, reason or religion," he asked, "that they that are rich must be continually so, and they that are poor must be always so?"²⁰⁶

Chamberlen's pamphlet seems to have attracted popular attention, for the *Faithful Scout*, of January, 1652-3, printed the copy of a petition to Parliament which embodied the main outlines of his scheme. The petitioners declare that, while it is the main work of Nature, Reason and Christianity to relieve the poor, little has actually been achieved, "all former Lawes, statutes and consultations having been of small effect hitherto: houses of Correction being more apt to make men (from being poor) to become Vagabonds and Beggars, by taking from them the Repute of so much Honesty, as not to be intrusted with employment." They undertake that, if they are granted the various sources of revenue mentioned in Chamberlen's treatise, "to be as a publique Treasure of the Land, for all publique Designs in one common

joynt Stock," they will manage the poor so profitably that they will be enabled to provide all necessities for the army, pay its arrears, render all taxes superfluous, pay the public debts and set up a bank.²⁰⁷

Hartlib, Chamberlen and Gerbier represent the best side of a progressive movement, which discarded the view of religion and industry put forward by Cooke as opposed to the true interests of humanity. While Cooke refused to countenance any theory of society which aimed at removing the poor from their proper stations, the liberal reformers saw no reason why they should not rise through their own efforts to positions at present occupied by their superiors. The main drawback to the fulfilment of this end lay in the means which the reformers proposed to employ, for they borrowed from a commercial model which had to be used with the utmost care if it was not to favour the strong at the expense of the weak, and cause men to forget the ultimate goal in the excitement of the race for increased prosperity. Ruthless severity towards the man who would not or could not help himself is reflected in the writings of the most progressive reformers. Hartlib had no mercy for the "obstinate, ungodly poor", and contended that the Biblical injunction of "he that will not work neither shall he eat" showed that earthly and heavenly laws were in agreement on this point.²⁰⁸ Even Young, with his appeals to an older and more charitable view of poverty, forbade the relief of sturdy beggars, "for to feed them is to fat vermin, to feed mice and rats, and polecats."²⁰⁹ "S. T." advocated starvation as the best means of forcing men to work,²¹⁰ and the author of the *Office and Duty of Churchwardens* agreed that even the House of Correction, with its hard work and punishments, was too enviable a fate for the wilful idler. He denied the necessity for any social responsibility for such a man, and extended the ban to his children. "They are not to take care for houses or other relief, for such as are able to work or may have work, nor yet for their Children . . . And therefore if any such person travel through a Parish with Children, and the Father die, and leave them in this case, the Parish is not bound, but in Charity to relieve them."²¹¹

Thus, fear and hatred of the wandering beggar made even the humanitarians forget their humanity, and it is not surprising that less enlightened men passed quickly over their schemes for labour exchanges and universal employment and fastened on their censures of vagrancy. The laziness of the

Englishman was assumed to be an almost ineradicable vice. Before the story of the Englishman, Scotsman and Irishman had emerged to bridge an awkward pause, the tale of a Scotsman, a Dutchman and an Englishman was told by "H. P." All three of them were condemned to death, but their lives were begged by three men who wanted to use them in various trades. "The first two accepted their offers thankfully, this last the Englishman told his maister in plaine termes his friends never brought him up to gather Hops, but desired he might be hanged first, and so he was."²¹² With the increased respect paid to wealth, it was naturally assumed that the sin of idleness was most rampant among those classes of society which had not inherited or acquired the right to leisure, and after the Restoration it was often stated that low wages were the only means of keeping the poor in a state of continuous industry.²¹³

The idea that the poor represented a hitherto undeveloped source of profit had some influence on the progressive reformers, but was more fully worked out by whole-hearted exponents of the doctrine of salvation by trade. To increase the English fishing trade was the dream of all true patriots and ambitious merchants, for at present the bulk of the fishing in English waters was monopolized by the Dutch. The reputed freedom from beggars and paupers which Holland enjoyed was said to be due to the ample employment provided by the fishing trade and its attendant industries. If only England would rouse herself, her poor could be provided for "in the manner of the Hollanders who thereby have a flourishing Commonwealth and doe not suffer an idle person among them".²¹⁴ One writer urged that efficient commercialism was better by far than inefficient poor relief, and that, since the greater part of the Poor Law legislation had not been properly administered, the poor should be employed in the fishing craft, where "the fishermen for their own gain will not only instruct the poor in that Craft, but also do their best endeavours therein for the good of them all".²¹⁵ Thomas Jenner, a member of the London Corporation for the Poor, dedicated to that body a pamphlet which is chiefly remarkable for its total neglect of the poor and insistence on the supreme importance of fish. Its author waxed eloquent on the way in which Holland had built up an empire on a foundation of herrings, "so that next to the English they are become the most redoubted Nation," and ended up with a peroration on the peculiar fitness of England

to dominate the world, the poor meanwhile having been allowed to sink into decent obscurity.²¹⁶ The writer of *Provision of the Poor* was in a more sober mood, and contented himself with laying down definite instructions for employing the poor in the fishing trade. Ten vessels were to be provided, victualled and used for catching herrings in the home waters. Besides those employed in the actual catching of fish, many hundreds would be set to work in affiliated industries. Care should be taken to ensure a maximum profit by employing a minimum number of officials and paying them the smallest salaries possible.²¹⁷ To such writers as these, the relief of the poor was a mere bye-product of increased commercial prosperity. Their pamphlets represent the logical extreme of a tendency which can be traced in the writings of many liberal reformers of the time, who drew up elaborate schemes of poor relief with one eye on the poor and the other on a prospective balance sheet.

Theoretical discussions were naturally far ahead of actual policy, and few of the Commonwealth reformers could flatter themselves that they had exercised much direct or immediate influence. But certain broad trends of opinion which are apparent in their writings were clearly reflected in national and municipal policy. The conservative view, represented by Moore, was at a discount, and the men who had the ear of the Government and public opinion were liberal reformers, such as Hartlib, and business experts like Jenner. On grounds of humanity and commercial expediency men should be set to work, and on grounds of morality and self-defence vagrants and beggars should be sternly repressed. It is probable that the Commonwealth Governments intended to apply both these maxims to the disorganized towns and countryside with which they had to deal, but the course of their finished legislation shows a strong bias towards the latter.

(IV) GOVERNMENTAL AND MUNICIPAL POLICY

(a) THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

The Poor Law policy of the Interregnum Governments falls into the familiar division of intention and achievement. Throughout the fifteen years between 1645 and 1660, Parliament seems to have been struggling to evolve a constructive and comprehensive system of relief and employment for the poor, yet the only measures which passed into law were those which had to do with the suppression of

vagrants. Already in 1645, the Committee for Maimed Soldiers joined with the Lord Mayor to consider how the poor in and near London might be set to work,²¹⁸ and in the spring of 1647, there is reference to an ordinance for relieving and employing poor people and punishing vagrants.²¹⁹ In March 1649, the Commons received several petitioners, who presented a petition on behalf of all the poor of the commonwealth. This document was found by the Commons to contain nothing of any particular value, but the petitioners were consoled with the information that the House had "divers Things under Consideration and Commitment, that they hope will be both of present and future Relief for the Poor: Which, together with other Matter of general and necessary Importance to the whole Nation, they will hasten the Consideration and Resolution of; and had been forwarder therein already, but for the Interruptions they daily receive". It was ordered that all members of the House should have a voice at the Committee for the Poor.²²⁰ Some days later, Alderman Pennington was told to report "the additional ordinance for the Poor", and it was decided that, in the meantime, letters signed by the Speaker should be sent to all justices, ordering them to see that the laws for relief of the poor were executed and directing them to be careful to hold their monthly meetings.²²¹ In May, 1649, Mr. Garland reported from the Committee for the Poor a measure for relieving and employing paupers and punishing vagrants within the London area. This Bill was ordered to be engrossed, and the committee was told to prepare another measure for setting the poor on work in all counties throughout England.²²² It was probably in connection with these proposed Acts that *Mercurius Pragmaticus*, a somewhat biassed organ, wrote that Parliament had resolved that: "Speedy Provision be made for the Poor. Yes, in the other world; . . . For the multitude of Beggars increasing, the State was resolved, if they be not rid of them by Famine, to give them a whipping out of England God knows whither, and make a Bridewell of this world to serve as a Purgatory to the next . . . So that you see, though our Saviours pretended to bring us out of Egypt, and establish us upon Zion by the ruins of Monarchy, yet they have mistaken their way and brought us into Turkey."²²³

It is impossible to decide if the Government deserved this sweeping condemnation, for a year later the promised Act had not yet been passed, and once more a committee

was directed to bring in a Bill for setting the poor to work throughout the nation.²²⁴ Again, in the autumn of 1650, a committee was told to consider all the existing laws concerning poor relief and to present to Parliament suggestions for employing the poor.²²⁵ In February, 1651, the committee presented its report. It advised that the Commissioners of Charitable Uses should be authorized under the Great Seal to inquire what moneys, lands or other goods had been given over to the relief of the poor and how these were employed. It was also suggested that cathedral churches, in places where there were enough ordinary places of worship, should be surveyed, pulled down and sold, and the proceeds used for the relief of the poor. On hearing this report, the Commons ordered that a debate on the poor should take place the next Thursday night.²²⁶ In the spring of 1652, a committee was again sitting to devise a way to set the poor to work and put an end to begging,²²⁷ and Parliament directed this body to revise all the laws for the relief and employment of the poor, and consider how it was that they had become ineffectual. They were also empowered to consider all proposals which were tendered to them by any interested person, and to report their opinion thereon to the House. Public interest in the question of poor relief seems to be indicated by the Commons' resolving that the several votes for relieving and employing the poor should be published.²²⁸ In January, 1653, a Bill for the relief of the poor was ordered to be read,²²⁹ but nothing more was heard of it, and, in 1656, a committee was ordered to prepare a Bill to enable a stock to be raised for setting the poor to work.²³⁰ At the close of the Interregnum, the long-expected Bill was still in the realm of good intentions, for in August 1659 a proposition to maintain the poor without begging was read, and the Committee for the Poor was revived to consider all existing measures of poor relief and report their opinion thereon to the House.²³¹

In the face of this continuous stream of resolutions and committees it is impossible to accuse the Commonwealth Parliaments of entire neglect of the more constructive side of poor relief; but to translate their good intentions into practice was difficult, and the only definite attempt which they made to employ the poor was represented by isolated orders with regard to the fishing trade. For instance, in 1649 the the Council informed the Lord Mayor that they had received a proposition from a certain Captain Fearnmes, which would

not only enable many thousands to be set to work but would materially increase the prosperity of trade. Since stock would have to be provided for carrying on this work, the Lord Mayor was told to put the scheme before the Common Council of the City and seek their help, "the rather that the poor may be provided for, in this time of great necessity and dearth."²³² The London Corporation evidently adopted some scheme connected with the fishing trade, for, in 1652, the Council informed the captains of all ships that the Corporation had fitted up a buss to fish in the North Seas.²³³ Again, in 1654, on the petition of the same body, the Council ordered that three dogger boats lying at Scarborough and one lying at Hull should be given to them for the use of the poor,²³⁴ and, on another occasion it directed that three busses taken by General Blake were to be delivered to them.²³⁵

While schemes for employing and relieving the poor raised knotty points and caused divergence of opinion, a one-sided policy of suppressing rogues and vagrants was both simple and popular. There is little doubt that the Civil Wars increased the numbers both of genuine rogues and of those workless men who were too often confused with them. During the restless years between 1640 and 1660 the wandering beggar was a political as well as an economic danger. With nothing to lose and the whole of time at his disposal, he could wander through the countryside and linger in the town, sowing seeds of discontent and taking part in any chance outburst of rebellion. Thus, it is not surprising that the Governments of the time, finding a constructive policy beset with pitfalls, should have turned with relief to a purely repressive line of action. Those measures which were suggested for setting the poor to work usually included a reference to the punishment of wandering beggars,²³⁶ and in 1649 the justices were ordered to execute the laws against vagrants and rogues, paying special attention to those who came out of Ireland.²³⁷ A committee was appointed in 1656 to revise all the statutes which concerned "wandering, idle, loose and dissolute Persons, Beggars, Rogues and Vagabonds, And to reduce them into one Law with such Alterations and Additions as shall be necessary".²³⁸ In the December of that year, Mr. Fowell reported a Bill from the committee, which had, significantly enough, confined itself to the question of rogues and vagrants, though other aspects of Poor Law reform had been submitted to its consideration.²³⁹

An interesting debate followed on the definition of

“vagrant”, always an elastic term. One of the committee’s recommendations was that all those found roving outside a ten mile radius from their dwellings should be accounted vagrants, but several members thought that this interpretation was too lenient. Major General Packer fixed the limit beyond which wandering became criminal at one to two miles, while both Christopher Packe and Alderman Foot declared that all wanderers should be confined to their parishes, since London was overrun by a class of people who obstructed the streets and yet committed no crime which made them eligible for the House of Correction. Colonel Edwards agreed that wanderers “have chain enough, keep them within their compass. If they know they have ten miles to rove in, by this means you give them forty miles circumference”. A few voices were raised in opposition to a definition of vagrancy which might lead to the confusion of the innocent with the guilty. Sir R. Onslow and Mr. Highland stipulated that: “if you make new wanderers and vagabonds other than ever our ancestors knew of, let us know what they are. In the statute they are enumerated by these *terminis generalibus*, any man may be adjudged by the justice to be a vagrant.” To this Major Audley added that: “if you leave it in the power of the justices to judge who shall be a wanderer, for aught I know I myself may be whipped, if I be found but ten miles from my own house, unless the justice of the peace will allow my excuse.” Most of the other members must have felt that objections based on the justices’ refusal or inability to recognize a gentleman were merely captious. In any case, the House decided to reject the amendment which provided for a ten mile radius within which the harmless wanderer was not assailable.²⁴⁰ In June, 1657, the prevalent opinion in the Commons was embodied in an Act for suppressing vagrants and idle persons. The Act declared that, since the number of idle, dissolute wanderers had lately very much increased by reason of certain defects in existing legislation, it had therefore become necessary to enact that any and every idle, dissolute person who was discovered wandering away from his place of abode, and was unable to give adequate reason for his wandering, should be judged a rogue and punished as such, although he was not taken begging. Fiddlers and minstrels found playing in any inn or tavern were to be branded as vagabonds without further parley.²⁴¹

(b) THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATION

In London, the administration of the Poor Law could be left to the new Corporation for the Poor,²⁴² but in the counties the burden still fell mainly on the justices, whose authority had been rudely shaken by the Civil Wars and the removal of the Privy Council. While all local administration must have been seriously disturbed during these years, it seems likely that that of the justices would be affected to an unusual degree. Their authority depended on the force of tradition and continuity, and was inseparably connected with the conciliar system of government which the Tudors had inaugurated and the Stuarts had improved. Now, both the spirit and machinery of the old régime were broken, and the justices no longer appeared as trusted representatives of an established Government. In Devonshire, there were numerous indictments for speaking against them. William Harding told a friend how he had bribed Justice Wollacomb, and added unrepentantly, "I wish that Wollacomb had him att the Bench when I was called ; itt should have sounded badly to his credit, but hee was att a Sermon, hee is one of the new Sett and his Clarke is fitter to be a justice than he is."²⁴³ However much truth there was in Harding's estimate of the new justices, it is certain that they would have far more difficulty than their predecessors in enforcing their authority. Thomas Mayhew of the Middle Temple was indicted at the Bedfordshire sessions for saying that he "cared not a —— for any justice of the peace in England", and a year later William Athey, butcher and constable, expressed the same sentiments in the same apparently unprintable language.²⁴⁴ In their attempts to repress vagrancy, the local authorities reflected the prevailing policy of the central Government, but there is little ground for thinking that they were directly inspired from above. Indeed, except during the brief reign of the Major Generals, it is difficult to see how the Government was able effectively to impose its wishes on the county administration.

The justices carried on the anti-vagrancy campaign partly by repairing and building Houses of Correction and Bridewells, and partly by improving the organization for apprehending vagrants. In 1646, the Somerset justices ordered that the House of Correction at Shepton Mallett, "which for a long time by reason of the present sad distractions hath layen unregarded," should be put under repair, and that tools

should be provided for employing the poor. A similar order was made with reference to the Taunton House of Correction.²⁴⁵ The Nottinghamshire justices, considering "the great want of a House of Correction in this Countie", ordered that the sum of £200 should be raised by contribution from the whole county to build a House at Southwell. This building seems to have been erected rapidly, for in 1656 the justices ordered that £5 should be paid to the Governor for providing tools and utensils. Three months later, the Court was informed that, since many disorderly persons were now in the House of Correction, and more likely to be sent thither, it was necessary to provide additional locks and bolts. In 1658, a petition was read from the Master, complaining that the House was in need both of repair and of an adequate stock and implements to set the prisoners to work. On condition that he procured all implements and provided a stock, the Master's salary was raised to £30.²⁴⁶

More attention was paid to the problem of finding and catching the elusive vagrant. One method was to appoint special officials for this purpose. In 1651, the Somerset justices appointed a suitable person to be known as a marshal, who was to discover and apprehend all rogues, vagabonds and suspicious persons within the county. The constables, tithingmen and other officers were to help him in this work, and the Treasurer of Hospitals was to pay him a salary which was to be increased if he proved worthy of it.²⁴⁷ A complaint was made in Nottinghamshire that various good laws for maintaining order and suppressing vagrants had not been put into execution. The Court of Quarter Sessions therefore ordered that all such laws should be enforced, and that two marshals should be appointed to see to the apprehension of rogues and vagrants. Financial considerations put an end to this experiment, and in 1659 it was ordered that the £20 formerly paid to the marshals should be divided between the Master of the House of Correction and the Treasurer for Maimed Soldiers.²⁴⁸ In 1655, the Court issued a definition of "rogue" which seems to have been identical with that laid down in the sixteenth century, and at the same sessions they considered the case of four vagrant persons, who had been brought before the justices and dismissed, since the charges against them could not be proved. Despite the lack of evidence, the Court ordered them to be "stockt, stript and whipt at Lenton by the Constable and sent to their several places of habitation".²⁴⁹

This order shows that some local authorities were ready to follow the example of Parliament and the London Corporation in refusing to give any vagrant the benefit of the doubt. A year later, the Nottinghamshire justices adopted a policy which had already been tried elsewhere and which made the apprehension and passing on of vagrants a source of profit as well as a public duty. The Court announced that they had taken note of an order made in adjacent counties for the allowance of two shillings to anyone who apprehended a vagrant and delivered him to the proper authorities. Since experience had shown this method to be successful, they had decided to adopt it in their own county. The sum of two shillings was to be paid by the constable to the first apprehender, and this amount would be repaid by one constable to another until the rogue was finally passed on to his birthplace, where the charge was to be borne by the inhabitants.²⁵⁰ In Northamptonshire, the Governor of the House of Correction was given the main responsibility for seeing that rogues were apprehended. Once in every two months from Michaelmas to Lady Day, and once in every six weeks from Lady Day to Michaelmas, he was to make inquiries in every town within the county as to the number of rogues and vagabonds who had been punished, to see that all such offenders were duly apprehended, and to indict those constables and other officers who were found to have neglected their duties.²⁵¹

The Settlement Law was a codification of existing practice, but even a declaratory Act is often important in showing the trend of opinion, and the Act of 1662 was the outcome of the increasingly severe attitude towards poverty and vagrancy which developed during the Interregnum. The Somerset parishes seem to have been obsessed with the fear of becoming overburdened by poor settlers. In 1649, the justices had to listen to a quarrel between two parishes about the settlement of a family who might become chargeable to one of them.²⁵² Sometimes, they had to induce the parishes to take up a more reasonable attitude. For instance, a certain Alice Kendon complained that, having lived in the parish of Streete for one and a half years, sickness now prevented her from working. She had tried to rent a house in the parish, but had been stopped by the inhabitants for fear she might become chargeable to them. The Court ordered that she should be settled at Streete or elsewhere according to law.²⁵³ A Shropshire parish refused point blank to obey the justices' order for settling a poor family there, and the Court declared

that, if the refusal continued, the offenders were to be bound over to appear at the next Quarter Sessions.²⁵⁴ In 1651, the Somerset parishes made a general complaint against those people who came back to live with their impoverished parents, and thus constituted a potential charge on the parish.²⁵⁵ In 1653, the Court read a petition from "severall poore distressed Inhabitants and Tradesmen of the parishe of Taunton S. James thereby shewing that the petitioners are much oppressed and the poore sorte ready to perishe for want occasioned by many journeymen, inmates, sojourners and strangers, lately come into the said parishe". Since the justices had made several ineffectual orders with regard to these men, the churchwardens and overseers were told to assess those who entertained "any journeymen, inmates, sojourners or strangers not lawfully settled in the said parishe", for the sum of 3s. 4d. a week over and above their existing rates.²⁵⁶ The inhabitants of Chirbury in Shropshire who had received any "strange poor" were regarded with similar suspicion, and were ordered to give security that they would "save the parish harmless" or appear at the next General Sessions.²⁵⁷ Other counties felt the same alarm at the thought of additional burdens, and acted with the same harshness in the matter of settlement. Thus, a woman and four small children who had lived in a North Riding parish for seven years, "beinge common beggars and likely to prove chargeable to the parish of East Witton," were removed to their last place of settlement.²⁵⁸ The inhabitants of Hacleton in Northamptonshire complained that a man and wife had come to their parish, "not having there gained any legall settlement or habitacion and in respect of their poverty are like to bring a sudden charge to the said towne yf they should there abide . . ." On the grounds of this suspicion, the offenders were ordered to be sent off to Buckinghamshire.²⁵⁹ From Bolsover in Derbyshire came a petition that a man, together with his wife and family, had "thrust himselfe into an ould ruinous howse which stood upon our wast ground where now hee doth remayne". The verdict was that the offender should be moved on to Clowne, where he had lived for one year.²⁶⁰ In 1656, an interesting expression of general policy appeared in the Liverpool Town Books: "It is ordered that hereafter this towne shall keepe and maintaine their owne poore, and that the poore of all other places shal be kept out from beging heere."²⁶¹

It seems clear that the county authorities were fully

convinced that the suppression of vagrancy was the first order of the day, but, side by side with the impression of intended severity, one gets the impression of inefficiency and neglect. Village constables seem to have been reluctant to inflict the full rigours of the law on men who were often unfortunate rather than wilfully idle. In Bedfordshire, several constables were presented for "suffering rogues and vagrants to pass unpunished".²⁶² The constables of three Northamptonshire villages were presented on the grounds that they had allowed "rogues, vagabonds, and sturdy beggars to begg, wander and goe att large without any punishment . . . to the great damage of divers persons of England and against the forme of a statute in that case made and provided".²⁶³ During the same year, five more constables in the county were presented for their great negligence in dealing with vagrants, and three were indicted because they had refused to apprehend certain beggars.²⁶⁴ The Somerset justices complained that the county swarmed with vagrants who escaped through the constables' neglect. These officers were told to attend to their duties and to keep constant watch between sunrise and sunset.²⁶⁵ In Nottinghamshire, the constables were accused of similar slackness in executing the anti-vagrancy statutes.²⁶⁶ There was often considerable reluctance to undertake a constable's duties, and in Hertfordshire there were several petitions from men who were impressed by their own unfitness to hold office.²⁶⁷

When the Major Generals were appointed, the extirpation of the vagabond was undertaken with renewed vigour, and their reports throw an unfavourable light on the administrative system which they found in existence. Berry's letter from Lincoln gives a picture of a countryside swept and garnished, but utterly lacking in life and energy. "The hearts of the enemy are fallen," he said, "and a word commands them; and all would be well here had we a few honest men to beare rule and lead the people. Our ministers are bad, our magistrates idle, and the people all asleepe; only these present actings have a little awakened."²⁶⁸ A good sheriff was a rare phenomenon,²⁶⁹ and Whalley found that, "what some justices, in order to reformation doe, others undoe; and the spirits of the best very lowe for want of such an officer to encourage them all. . . . But 'tis of absolute necessity you put us in commission of peace, where we are major generalls . . ." ²⁷⁰ The towns were reported to be in as bad a state as the counties. Berry wrote from

Monmouth: "I am much troubled with these markett townes everywhere, vices abounding and magistrates fast asleepe."²⁷¹

The apprehension of vagrants appealed strongly to the Major Generals, who thereby hoped to encourage morality and guard against political unrest. The commissioners for Cheshire reported that they had suppressed two hundred alehouses, punished those who had contracted illegal marriages, and brought to justice several persons, "which by a strict inquiry are found to be loose and idle persons that live without calling."²⁷² Whalley wrote from Nottingham, in 1656, that "you may ride all over Nottinghamshaire and not see a beggar or a wandring rogue".²⁷³ The difficulty of disposing of vagrants after arrest was a serious problem. In 1655, Worsley reported that progress was being made in the suppression of idle, wandering persons, but added that there was a crying need for a suitable place wherein to lodge them.²⁷⁴ Whalley reported the same trouble,²⁷⁵ and Boteler wrote from Oundle in 1656 to suggest that transportation would solve the difficulty. He declared that rogues were not fit to live "on this side some or other of our plantations; I could help you to 2 or 300, at 24 hours' warning, and the countreys would thinke themselves well ridd of them".²⁷⁶ This scheme seems to have appealed to the Government, for in August, 1656, the Council informed the Major Generals that, having heard of their indifferent success in apprehending rogues, they wished to impress upon them the urgent necessity of arresting all such persons, "and they have appointed a committee to treat with merchants to send them speedily out of the country." A list of the rogues already taken was to be sent to this committee, and the offenders would be conveyed to the coast under charge of the army or new militia.²⁷⁷

The duty of employing the poor was not so popular with local authorities as that of attempting to suppress vagrancy. Nevertheless, a substantial number of exceptions are recorded. The Nottingham Corporation agreed in 1649 to contract with W. James to set the poor of the town to work. On their part, the Corporation agreed to lend him £20 to buy twelve spinning wheels and to pay him 21s. 6d. a quarter. On his part, James agreed to "sett the poore on worke with spininge of linen and wollen cardinge, weake pullinge out of Candleweake," and to allow them certain rates fixed by the town for their work.²⁷⁸ At Leicester, £100 was set aside

by the town to be lent out to such "able persons" as the overseers of the poor should select for setting the poor to work. at the same time, it was agreed that the Master of Bridewell should have £10 for employing the poor, and that a committee of three should devise employment for them on the public works of the town.²⁷⁹ In the Reading records, there are several references to the employment of the poor. In 1647, Mr. Tubb petitioned for the sum of £50 to provide a stock for setting the poor to work,²⁸⁰ and in 1649 the Corporation agreed that the overseers for the parish of St. Lawrence should have those spinning wheels which were now in the hospital as a means of employment.²⁸¹ Four years later, a clothier of the town was granted £100 from a certain charity on condition that he employed the poor in Mr. Kendrick's workhouse.²⁸² At Aylesbury, in 1658, 1,493 lbs. of hemp were bought by the overseers at 8*d.* a lb., and the poor were paid for spinning it at 4*d.* a lb. After the yarn had been sent to the weavers, who received £3 4*s.* 4*d.* for their work, it was finally sold at a total loss of £9 17*s.* 12*d.* During the following year the loss was greater, and after that the overseers decided to enter into contract with two men, who employed the poor at a charge of £8 10*s.*²⁸³ In Hertfordshire, too, there is evidence of some activity on the part of justices and inhabitants. From Stortford, in 1645, came a complaint that three men were holding up certain funds called "the townstock" which should have been used for setting the poor to work, and the justices thereupon transferred the funds to three other inhabitants of the town.²⁸⁴ Five years later, the justices ordered that a rate should be levied in the parish of Hitchin for raising a stock to employ the poor, those refusing employment to be sent to the House of Correction.²⁸⁵ On the petition of its inhabitants, a similar order was made for Ware.²⁸⁶

The Shropshire Quarter Session records contain occasional references to the apprenticeship of pauper children,²⁸⁷ and in the North Riding manuscripts there are details of a scheme for employing the poor. It was decided in April, 1652, that there should be entered in the justices' order book an agreement for setting poor persons to work on spinning and knitting woollen drapery in the House of Correction at Pickering. A certain Mr. Battersby was to be head of the place, and to employ at his own charge all those who were willing and able to work or who were recommended to him by the overseers. He would receive a salary, and be freed from all assessments

on his manufactures for seven years. The goods produced were to consist of woollen draperies, stockings and "jerseys", and Battersby was ordered to import jersey spinners and knitters and "a sufficient able woolcomber" to instruct the poor in their work. Those employed would receive wages assessed by the justices.²⁸⁸

Despite the foregoing instances of employment, it seems true to say that during the Interregnum the emphasis was shifted from the employment of the poor to the suppression of the vagrant. It has been suggested by Miss Leonard that the main reason for this was that, as a result of the demand made by the wars upon man-power, "all who were not altogether incapable could get employment, and there would be no need for the parochial stocks of materials."²⁸⁹ This contention is based on a calculation made by A. Kingston that, in Hertfordshire, about 5,000 men were serving in the Parliamentary army and others with the Royalists, and on a statement in the Hertford County Records that there was a great scarcity of men to get in the harvest.²⁹⁰ But the evidence of contemporary literature, of public policy and charitable administration all go to show that the problems of unemployment and vagrancy were greatly aggravated by the Civil Wars. It is probably true that agricultural districts would need men to carry on their ever-necessary activities, but the same does not apply to the towns or to industrial areas in the country where trades were badly disorganized.²⁹¹ When the wars were over, the influx of wounded soldiers and men who had thrown up their former occupations to join the army created unprecedented problems. The pamphlet literature of the time is full of schemes for employing the poor, and the Commonwealth Parliaments were continually appointing committees to devise a means by which unemployment might be remedied. The explanation of why public policy gradually confined itself to the repressive side of the problem lies in the difficulty of evolving a constructive solution, and still more in the changed attitude to poverty which developed during the Interregnum.

(c) THE LONDON CORPORATION FOR THE POOR

The foundation of the London Corporation for the Poor was the most important administrative achievement of the time. The increase of poverty and vagrancy which followed on the wars was specially marked in London, and, as early

as 1642, the Governors of Bridewell appeared before the Court of Aldermen to complain that many vagrants and sturdy, dissolute persons infested the streets by day and night. Neither constables nor marshals apprehended them as they ought, but only brought in a few impotent people.²⁹² Three years later, "many thousand" London citizens presented a petition to the Common Council stating that the increase of the poor was likely to become "an insupportable burden and great danger".²⁹³ A committee was appointed to consider both the petition and the draft of a Bill to be presented to Parliament. The growing difficulties with which the London hospitals had to cope led to a recognition of the necessity for some sort of unity in their administration. In 1642, after the Governors of Bridewell had stated their case, the Aldermen ordered representatives of Christ's, St. Thomas's and Bridewell hospitals to meet together to discuss the situation,²⁹⁴ and in 1644 the heads of the four hospitals were again ordered to meet and consider how the charges of each could be met.²⁹⁵ The Common Council submitted to Parliament in 1647 the draft of an ordinance for the relief of the poor, and made an addition to the draft whereby the Mayor's authority over the hospitals of Bridewell and St. Thomas's would be increased.²⁹⁶ This movement towards centralized control helped to bring about the ordinance of 1647, which established the Corporation for the Poor.

A writer who describes himself as Rice Bush attributes the birth of the Corporation to the efforts made by himself and his friends. He states that, in 1644, a gentleman, who was impressed by the bad condition of the English poor as compared with those of other nations, called a meeting to discuss the whole subject. At this meeting, Dutch methods of solving the problem were examined, and a petition which was sent to the Lord Mayor and Common Council resulted in the Act of 1647. Bush admits that, although the Act outlines the general trend of the proposed schemes, some particulars have been left out, and in supplying the omissions he indicates a policy which certainly does not appear in the Act. He remarks that the only way to remedy poverty is to discover its root cause, and he says that this lies not so much in the absence of good statutes as in their bad administration. "The law saith, Provide houses and work, apprehend the vagrant, set to work the destitute, and fine the giver and the Constable that admit any to beg. But instead of execution

and practise, we say, The cost of building houses will be great, there will be losse by work, let the poor beg . . . and infer, why should the giver be fined when the poor is almost starved ? . . . And the consequence is to all men evident, that Foolish pity spoils a well governed City and Kingdom.” Rice Bush echoes a general tendency towards repression in advocating the sterner execution of the vagrancy laws, but he was more acute than most of his contemporaries in realizing that the problem which confronted him was largely that of genuine unemployment. He declared that one of the chief causes of poverty was the decay of trade, and advised men to pay more attention to this aspect of the problem, with special emphasis on the question of foreign trade. He pointed out that to separate industrial and Poor Law administration led inevitably to confusion, as when an already overstocked trade was inundated with pauper apprentices. The remedy was for the Poor Law authorities to consult constantly with representatives of the various London trades. While the problem of unemployment should be capable of ultimate solution, there would always remain certain classes of the community who would need special help. Bush thought that in some cases relief could even be extended. It was necessary that “some constant source be settled for the relief of the poor by way of physick and chirurgery: for it’s better to cure the sick and lame than constantly keep them so, also to discover counterfeiting of sicknesse . . .” The poor should be prevented from wasting their substance in legal bickerings, which did them no good and merely filled the lawyers’ pockets. All those who possessed under £10 were to be forbidden to go to law until a body of “Elders”, appointed by Parliament for the purpose, had heard their case. Unlike most writers, Bush believed that genuine distress could exist even in the homes of thrifty men, and he advised that some method of relief should be settled for “poor house-keepers, who suffer great necessity (not known to all), some for want of work, others for want of stock, some having no utterance for work, all of them complaining they want food in their several families ”.²⁹⁷

Rice Bush’s conception of the Corporation’s duties is not reflected in the statutes and records which illustrate its actual performances. Despite his description of its origin, it seems more likely to have been the result of pressure from the City authorities, and to have had as its main objects

the strengthening of municipal control over the London hospitals and the more effectual repression of beggars. The Act of 1647 is more concerned with the reform of administration than with that of policy. The preamble states that the number and necessity of the poor within London is due to the imperfect execution of existing legislation. To remedy this defect, it has been decided to erect a Corporation, consisting of a President, Deputy, Treasurer, and Assistants. The Lord Mayor is to be President, and the Assistants are to be Aldermen and Freemen. Thus, the Corporation for the Poor was merely the most influential members of the ordinary government acting in another capacity. They were to have power to erect workhouses and make bye-laws for the relief of the poor and the apprehension of vagrants. Also, in view of the inequalities in the administration of relief caused by the varying capacities of the City wards, the Corporation was empowered to divide the whole City into four equal parts. Other municipalities throughout England were given leave to erect similar corporations.²⁹⁸ In January, 1649, a committee sitting in Weavers' Hall complained that the constitution of the London Corporation was imperfect, since it had not enough power to appoint officers or repress sturdy beggars.²⁹⁹ A further Act was passed in 1649 which declared that the Corporation might lawfully apprehend any rogues or idle, disorderly persons within the City and cause them to be set to work. They could employ all poor persons and bastard children and, in case they refused to work, punish them as vagrants. When the Corporation needed a stock to employ the poor, they were to inform the Common Council of the City, who were authorized to levy assessments on the various wards. For the better execution of justice, those Aldermen who had been sheriffs were to become justices of the peace. The Corporation was to have the same power as the justices in executing the statutes for punishing vagrants, relieving and employing the poor and binding children as apprentices. In other respects, their duties were not materially altered.³⁰⁰

The Corporation and the central Government worked in close alliance. In 1649, on the petition of the President and Governors of the Poor, the "House called the Wardrobe, situate in or near Black Fryers" and a house in the Minories were given to the Corporation.³⁰¹ The sum of £100,000 was granted out of the Duke of Buckingham's estate,³⁰² and in 1650 orders were given that £1,000 should be paid to the

Treasurer of the Corporation by the Commissioners for Compounding.³⁰³

Despite occasional references to the number of poor whom they set to work, it seems clear that the chief business of the London Corporation at this time was the suppression of vagrancy. The only constructive proposal with which they can be credited was a suggestion that the revenue from the inland postage should be used for the benefit of the poor. In the autumn of 1649, the Common Council received a written scheme to this effect from the President and Governors of the Corporation, but, though they approved of the idea, they ordered the Corporation to put it into a more definite form.³⁰⁴ By November, they seem to have been satisfied that the scheme was sound, for they gave orders that a petition should be sent to Parliament recommending its adoption.³⁰⁵ It is doubtful if Parliament received this suggestion in good part, but, nevertheless, in February of the next year a committee received instructions from the Common Council to settle stages and other matters connected with a postal system managed by the City.³⁰⁶ By the end of March, this organization had aroused the opposition of Parliament and the City posts were suppressed.³⁰⁷

In their campaign against vagrancy, the Corporation met with no opposition from Parliament. Their severity was not without foundation, for in London, even more than in the country, the line which divided the agitator and the criminal from the mere loiterer was very narrow. The Mayor insisted that the vagrancy laws should be enforced, "for the better suppressinge of anie outrages or tumults and preventinge of anie mischiefes and damages that may be attempted to be committed in these times of greate distracion".³⁰⁸ The householders were more concerned with the easy transition from begging to pilfering, and in 1656 the constables were told to be specially vigilant in their duties, "Forasmuch as many loose and vagrant people harbouring in obscure places in this cittie and liberties thereof doe wander up and downe and often under cover of begging doe pilfer and steal."³⁰⁹ The Corporation for the Poor and the Lord Mayor worked together in attempting to suppress vagrancy. In 1645, the Lord Mayor told the Aldermen that the "streetes and lanes doe exceedinglie abound with Rogues, Beggars and idle wandringe poore, because the punishments imposed by the lawes and statutes . . . are not inflicted upon them", and in this and subsequent orders

he impressed upon them the necessity of seeing that every parish was provided with stocks and whipping posts.³¹⁰ Again, in 1649, the Lord Mayor declared that : "the City of London and the Liberties thereof, is exceedingly pestered with Rogues, Vagabonds and Sturdy Beggars, as wel Men as Women, which wander abroad about the Streetes and Lanes thereof, to the dishonour of the City, and grievance of the good Inhabitants of the same." At the instance of the Corporation for the Poor, he told the Aldermen to call the constables before them and order them to apprehend all rogues and vagabonds, and either to whip them and pass them away, or send them to Bridewell, "where order is already taken for their imployment and setting them to work."³¹¹

Two years later, the Aldermen were told to call the constables before them and charge them either to administer the law or to expect the penalty of forty shillings to be levied on their estates for every vagabond found begging within their precincts. Aged or infirm persons were to be passed from constable to constable to the parish where they dwelt, and men who were able-bodied but persisted in begging were to be sent to their parish for the first offence and to Bridewell for the second. Those who made use of the "professional baby" were to be sent straight to Bridewell.³¹² The parish of St. Margaret's, Westminster, instituted a definite system of rewards and punishments to encourage householders and officers to execute the law. Two shillings reward was paid to everyone who apprehended a vagrant, the charge being borne by the offender's birthplace. Officers and citizens alike were fined for neglect in this duty, and the ministers of the various parishes were given the task of entering the day and place of the rogue's punishment in a book.³¹³

Yet, despite the continuous efforts of the London authorities, vagrancy remained an unsolved problem. While the Corporation seemed well satisfied with its efforts towards employing the deserving poor, it had to confess that wanderers still thronged the streets. In 1653, it reported that : "besides the reliefe and education of poor, friendless and harborless Children in Learning and Arts, many hundred of poor families are employed and relieved by the said Corporation in the Manufacture of Spinning and Weaving." Yet, although it made this claim, the Corporation had to implore the help of all magistrates in enjoining the constables to discharge their

duties in suppressing the hordes of vagrants that still frequented the city.³¹⁴ Continued failure to enforce his policy caused the Lord Mayor to protest bitterly in 1655 that by "neglect of executing the good Lawes and Statutes against Rogues, Vagabonds, and Sturdy Beggars, that Vermine of the Commonwealth doth now swarme in and about the City and Liberties, disturbing and annoying inhabitants and Passengers . . . beguiling the Modest and Laborious poore (the proper objects of Charity) of much reliefe and Almes which otherwise might be disposed to them . . ." ³¹⁵

In his capacity as President of the Corporation of the Poor, the Lord Mayor reported the same failure. He declared that there were many vagrants who habitually frequented the streets and refused to take up any lawful employment. The Corporation proposed to increase the efficiency of the present system by appointing a "competent number of able men under a Sallary" to spend their whole time in helping the constables to apprehend beggars. All fragments of bread and meat "which has usuall been distributed to the beggars" were to be collected by basket men, who would give them only to those extreme cases selected by the churchwardens and overseers as worthy objects of relief.³¹⁶

Towards the end of the Interregnum, the courage of the London Poor Law authorities began to fail. In March, 1658, the Court of Aldermen heard from the London Corporation that they could not much longer bear the heavy charge which they were expected to take in apprehending and punishing vagrants, and they added that "the same hath not proved soe effectuall a way and means to that end as was expected".³¹⁷ The Court of Aldermen made a final attempt to stamp out the plague, which had hitherto resisted their most strenuous efforts, by declaring that all persons who might legally be taken for rogues, and all idle persons and masterless men must leave London within one week and return to their place of lawful settlement. Anyone who remained in London after this time, "wandering or mis-ordering themselves," was to be whipped and then passed on to his birthplace or last place of settlement. Such beggars as pleaded that they were unable to work were to be brought before the justices to be examined.³¹⁸

The general impression which the Poor Law policy of the Interregnum leaves is that of harshness coupled with failure. The policy both of the central Government and the local administration reflected clearly the heightened severity

towards poverty and vagrancy, while it caught only passing gleams of the humanitarian spirit which appears in the writings of Hartlib and Chamberlen. This one-sided administration of the Poor Law had not even the virtue of success, for the efficacy of the vagrancy laws depended on a vigorous co-operation of the local authorities and central Government, and, during the greater part of the Interregnum, no such co-operation existed. But though Governments might fail to translate their intentions into practice, the period is important as marking the development of a new attitude towards poverty on the part of the ruling classes. In this, as in other directions, the men of the Interregnum anticipated the eighteenth century. The Poor Law policy of the first fifty years of that century is epitomized on its administrative side in the Settlement Law, and on its theoretical side in Defoe's writings, both of them a development of Commonwealth theory and practice. The law of 1662 emphasized the harsh side of existing practice by providing that the poor settler was to be looked upon as a species of criminal, and hustled off to the doubtful welcome of his own parish. Unemployment, henceforth to be regarded as a sort of disgraceful disease, was attributed by Defoe to a deliberate attempt on the part of the poor to evade work. In 1704, he was able to stop the passage of a Bill to levy rates for carrying on manufactures in workhouses by insisting that: "'tis the men that will not work, not the men who can get no work, which makes the numbers of our poor." No Englishman who is sound in wind and limb need be idle, and the various institutions for employing the poor are merely public nuisances. "Truly the scandal lies in our charity, and people have such a notion in England of being pitiful and charitable that they encourage vagrants, and by a mistaken zeal do more harm than good." ³¹⁹

CHAPTER VII

PROJECTS OF SOCIAL REFORM

“Relieve the oppressed, hear the groans of poor prisoners in England. Be pleased to reform the abuses of all professions . . .”
Cromwell to Lenthall, Dunbar, September 4th, 1650.

IN most of the social and economic movements of the time it is possible to detect what may be called a liberal point of view, distinct at once from the conservatism of such men as Cooke and Moore and from the extreme democracy of Winstanley and his followers. It was a spirit of inquiry and reform rather than of revolution, and it is most clearly evident in the projects of general social reform which characterized the Commonwealth. Even in the realm of Utopias, the more moderate and pedestrian schemes of Cornelius and Hartlib must be put alongside the Diggers' commonwealth, while in the field of administrative, legal, and educational reforms the liberals were supreme.

There was a widespread feeling that social amendments must follow in the wake of constitutional reform. Mr. Samuel Chidley,¹ writing to Cromwell, looked forward to a time when “all trades should flourish, and no poore starve in the streets, then no more people should be put to death for trifles, but their precious lives saved according to the word of God”.² Mr. Herring suggested similar ideas to Parliament, and added that it would be a good thing if “the rich knaves and fooles of the outward world be compelled to worke”.³ There was some popular agitation for social reform, and in 1647 “many thousands” appealed to the House of Lords to amend the criminal law, the law of debt, and the condition of the poor. They thanked their Lordships for what had been already accomplished, but reminded them that there were “thousands of Men and Women still, as formerly, permitted to live in Beggary and Wickedness all their Life long, and to breed their Children to the same idle and vicious Course of Life, and no effectual Means used to reclaim or to reduce them to any virtue or Industry”.⁴

(I) THE COMMONWEALTH UTOPIAS

The publication of several Utopias was a sign that some men, at least, were not prepared to apply the philosophy of Panglos to Puritan England. These Utopias are remarkable for the stress which they lay upon social and economic reform, and Harrington seems to have been the greatest of a group of writers who penetrated behind the political facade of their country to its economic interior. "Dominion," said Harrington, "is Propriety reall or personall, that is to say, in Lands or in money and goods,"⁵ and his view was borne out by Winstanley, Hartlib, and Peter Cornelius.

To Winstanley, as to Harrington, the distribution of land was the most important feature in the constitution of the state, but here the likeness between them ended. Harrington was a realist, while Winstanley was an idealist of a very extreme type. He also differed fundamentally from Harrington in building his Utopia on a definitely spiritual basis. In Oceana, religion was made harmless and flavourless, while in Winstanley's Utopia it was the beginning and end of society. "The great Lawgiver in the Commonwealth's Government," he says, "is the spirit of universal Righteousness dwelling in Mankinde, now rising up to teach everyone to do to another as he would have another do to him; and is no respector of persons." Mere lip service to this ideal was worse than useless, and "he who professes the service of the righteous God by preaching and prayer and makes a trade to get possession of the Earth shall be put to death for a Witch or a Cheater".⁶ Throughout the various pamphlets in which Winstanley preached his crusade for the equal ownership of land, the same insistence on religious sanctions is evident, and is, indeed, sometimes more strikingly expressed than in the *Law of Freedom*.⁷

While Harrington agreed with Aristotle that the manual worker lay outside the pale of those who could hope ever to develop their highest possibilities,⁸ Winstanley saw in each individual a potential aristocrat, and aimed at securing for him a share in the possession of land, the necessary preliminary to the good life. He prefaced his description of Utopia by an appeal to Cromwell to see that "the Oppressor's Power be cast out with his person", and the land distributed to the common people. If this reformation were not carried out, then "you must onely remove the Conqueror's Power out

of the King's hand into other men's . . . and you will either lose yourself or lay the Foundation of greater Slavery to posterity than ever you knew ". In the land, says Winstanley, lies the source of all riches and power, "and so from the Thief upon the Highway to the King who sits upon the throne, does not everyone strive, either by force of Arms or secret cheate to get possession of the Earth one from another, because they see their Freedom lies in plenty and their bondage in poverty ? " From this universal land hunger, Winstanley argued a universal right to possession, "a man had better to have had no body than to have had no food for it."

Although Winstanley was essentially a mystic and an idealist, he made a determined, and by no means unsuccessful attempt to describe the practical means by which his ends were to be obtained. The organization which he intended to set up was some sort of communism, but he does not indicate clearly the lengths to which this system was to go. In his Utopia everyone had to work, partly because work was good for their bodies and minds, and partly because it was necessary for the upkeep of the commonwealth. Men planted the earth and reaped its harvest by means of mutual co-operation, and the fruits of their labours were deposited in "general" storehouses or shops, from which individuals could fetch materials for their work or for their own private use. There were also "particular" storehouses, or shops, to which tradesmen brought their work, and from whence it was distributed to those who needed it.

In common with other reformers of the time, Winstanley laid great stress on the importance of improved means of communication, as a way of breaking down barriers and creating fresh bonds of sympathy between different sections of the community. He proposed to appoint officials whose duty it would be to establish communications between the most remote parts of the country. Each parish would choose two men, known as Postmasters, to report the local news to a central authority, which would bring together their reports in a "Weekly Bill of Observation". The same information would also be published in a book, copies thereof being distributed to every Postmaster, "so that as they bring up the affairs of one Parish in writing, they may carry down in print the Affairs of the whole Land." Such an organization as this would benefit men not only in times of war and famine, but also in the great events of peace, as when a new invention

was discovered, "many thereby will be encouraged to employ their Reason and Industry to do the like."

In view of the importance attributed to education by Commonwealth reformers, it is not surprising to find Winstanley devoting considerable space to its problems, and stating that "the neglect of this case or the want of wisdom in the performance of it hath been and is the cause of much division and trouble in the world". In his Utopia, a child was to be educated by his parents for the first few years of his life, and then sent to school, first to learn the laws of the commonwealth, and to ripen his wits generally, and then to proceed to an acquaintance with all arts and languages. Winstanley is emphatic that no one class shall be trained exclusively in book learning, as under a monarchy, "for then through idleness . . . they spend their time to find out policies to advance themselves to be Lords and Masters over their labouring brethren . . . which occasions all the trouble in the world." Instead, everyone will learn some manual trade, mechanical inventions being particularly encouraged. Young and ambitious inventors are not to be frowned upon and disheartened, but helped to perfect their designs, and, if these prove successful, a "deserved honour" will be conferred upon their authors. Men will come to increase their mastery over nature, not only because of this direct encouragement of inventions, but also as a consequence of the great flow of creative energy which will be set free by the general improvement in social conditions. "And certainly," says Winstanley, "when men are sure of food and raiment, their reasons will be ripe and ready to dive into the secrets of the Creation . . . for fear of want and care to pay Rent to Taskmasters hath hindered many rare Inventions."

Winstanley was a social rather than a political reformer, and the political superstructure of his Utopia was clearly added after the social foundations had been laid. After the authority of fathers of families, he says, will come that of overseers, whose duty it is to preserve peace, regulate industry and trade, and generally watch over the welfare of the people. The institution of Parliament is retained, but its legislative functions are ignored, and Winstanley defines it as the highest Court of Equity in the land, whose duty it is to supervise all other courts and remove any grievances which may arise. The soldiers in Utopia are also magistrates, and in peace time an important part of their work is the care of criminal

offenders, whom Winstanley insists are to be regarded as unfortunate or erring members of society rather than as outcasts. When a man is convicted of a capital crime, he is not imprisoned during the interval between sentence and execution. Instead, he is given the chance of mending his ways, and, if the testimony of his own actions and of his neighbours' reports is satisfactory, his sentence may be mitigated by the judge, "for it is amendment not destruction that the Commonwealth's Law requires."

Like Winstanley, Samuel Hartlib was interested mainly in the economic and social structure of his Utopia, but he attacked it from the widely different angle of the practical administrator. Without wasting any time upon a discussion of first principles, he plunged immediately into the question of organization, and focussed his attention upon the Whitehall of *Macaria*.⁹ At the head of affairs, there was a Great Council, similar to the English Parliament, but, having brought this body into existence, Hartlib swept it aside, and concentrated his attention upon the five subsidiary councils which managed the economic business of the state, and were endowed with both administrative and legislative power. The first of these councils was the Council of Husbandry, whose business it was to see that all the land in the country was cultivated to the best advantage. If any individual possessed more land than he was able to cultivate efficiently, then "he shall be admonished, first, of the great hindrance which it doth to the Commonwealth, secondly of the prejudice to himselfe; and if hee doth not amend his Husbandry within a yeare's space, there is a penalty set upon him, which is yeerely doubled, till his lands be forfeited and hee banished out of the Kingdome, as an enemy to the Commonwealth". The Council of Trade by Land was concerned mainly with regulating the labour supply by enforcing longer or shorter terms of apprenticeship, while the Councils of Trade by Sea, of New Plantations and of Fishing attempted to extend English influence in these spheres. The functions of the Council of New Plantations were particularly interesting, for colonization, instead of being the outcome of unregulated enterprise on the part of individuals or groups, was to be directed by the state, acting through this Council. Every year, a certain number of men would be sent out to the colonies and subsidized by the home authorities till they were able to shift for themselves.

The other subject in which the Government of *Macaria*

specialized was that of public health. The state maintained a College of Experiments from which medicines were distributed, and anyone who made a discovery which contributed to the national "health or wealth" was rewarded at the public expense. The usefulness of parish priests, declared Hartlib, would be much increased if they were to acquire a knowledge of physical healing, and in *Macaria* "they think it as absurd for a Divine to be without skill of Physick, as it is to put new wine into old bottles". It seems possible that Hartlib would not have been sorry to see his Utopian priests concentrate their interest upon things material, for, like poets, they might tend to be a disturbing influence in a well-ordered state. He attempted to guard against this danger by declaring that no variety of religious opinions should be allowed to his Macarians, the Great Council deciding every year what the state religion should be. Another danger was that the priests might exercise a retrograde influence, by pouring cold water on schemes for the betterment of mankind through administrative reforms and insisting that Heaven must remain for ever in the clouds. But Hartlib noted that, against this latter tendency, must be balanced the progressive influence of "natural causes", such as printing, which "will so spread knowledge that the common people, knowing their own rights and liberties, will not be governed by way of oppression, and so, little by little, all kingdoms will be like to *Macaria*".

Peter Cornelius, in *A Way Propounded to Make the Poor Happy*,¹⁰ agreed with Winstanley that Utopias could not be constructed from purely material fabrics. The trouble at the root of society, he says, is that all men, from the rich merchant to the poor labourer, are imbued with purely selfish desires, which lead ultimately to unhappiness and confusion. The ideal commonwealth must rest its foundations upon the Christian spirit, which is in direct opposition to the generally accepted standards of the world, "where they are accounted the greatest who have most servants, and not they who do most service to others." Society, says Cornelius, is one body, and men should not forget that they were created in order that they might live for the glory of God and the advancement of their fellow men. Even princes were not brought into the world so that they might build palaces, or rich men so that they might boast of their gold. "In a word, Mankind is not born for . . . being rich and running into excess, but all these racks of the mind it hath invented of itselfe and now

made a custom and habitual," and one of the first advantages which will accrue from the new society is a greater tranquillity of mind.

The organization of Cornelius's society was planned on the lines of a joint stock company. Communism evidently appealed to him as a possibility, but, both upon practical and ethical grounds, he rejected the idea of establishing it by compulsion. A man might voluntarily give up his whole property to the commonwealth, but a more general procedure would be for him to invest it in the common stock and receive it back again with profits whenever he decided to leave the society. Members of his commonwealth lived together in two big households, one in the city and one in the country, each house accommodating about twenty or thirty families, who had private rooms of their own but dined together in a central hall. Within these two households, all the work of the state was carried on, trade and commerce in the town house and handicrafts and agriculture in the country house. Every six or twelve months the accounts were made up, and whatever remained above a certain necessary minimum was distributed to the members of the society for their private use. The chief governor of the society was a man of about forty years old, chosen yearly by the people and ruling according to the broad principles which they had laid down.

As a result of this reformed organization, says Cornelius, the whole conditions under which trade is carried on will be changed, for "whereas the traders in the world do oppress their workmen with heavy labour and small wages, instead thereof with us the gain of tradesmen will redound to the benefit and refreshment of workmen". The prices asked for goods will be the lowest instead of the highest possible, and, in everything, the good of the community will be considered first. Whereas now it is common for men to conceal their special skill in any art from one another, "here in our Society they are to bring it in and impart it to the common welfare, being the only way to find the height, depth, length, and breadth of all things." In this Utopia, the feverish race for individual profit will cease, merchants and tradesmen will no longer "continually hover between hope and fear", but will go quietly about their business, realizing that neither extreme poverty nor riches will ever come to them.

Every member of Cornelius's Utopia received a good education, and though the children of the poorer classes concentrated their attention upon handicrafts, there was

no attempt made thereby to degrade or enslave them, "as commonly is seen among the children of the World, especially in England." On the question of religious instruction, Cornelius was extraordinarily advanced. He stipulated that the children of his Utopia should receive no definite form of religious teaching. Instead, they would study the writings of saints, the natural arts, sciences, and languages, and not until their reasoning powers were fully developed would they be considered ready to choose their special faith. Cornelius realized that their choice would not be uniform, but he did not shrink from the consequences. "For our children without doubt will be of differing opinions," he said, "and yet no reason when they do not hinder the common welfare to exclude them from the Society."

A writer, who describes himself as "W. Covel, gentleman", published in 1659 the *Method of a Commonwealth*,¹¹ a treatise which is remarkable rather for its vituperation against existing conditions than for its construction of a new world. To this writer, money is the root of all evils which afflict society, and it is "the clashing of Swords, the noise of the Hammers, the ratling of Coaches, the observing of Fashions, the fine things on your backs . . . your great gains and sometimes great losses which hinder you from hearing the Voice." Evil first entered in when man's inventive power developed, and he built cities wherein the rich were given opportunities to oppress the poor. Now, everyone bows down to the Golden Idol, for "what cannot buyers and sellers have, if that they ask for it to advance Trade?"

In considering the reform of these evils, Covel rebuked his readers for their failure to organize themselves in a good cause, "for we want method exceedingly in association together in good things, we see it practised in wicked things." With considerable optimism, he looked for the inauguration of Utopia to a party of rich men, who would give up their lands and goods to form the nucleus of a common stock, and would afterwards be known as "Fathers of the State". Like most writers of the period, Covel did not advocate complete or logical communism, for he allowed his Fathers to trade with their own goods and lands and to dispose of them at will to their friends and families. The common herd, however, would be under a stricter rule. A large number of families would eat together, and when a man died his property would be divided equally among his children. Trade would

be freed from the shackles of monopoly and organized upon a communistic basis, all charters of incorporation being revoked and workmen being employed upon a common stock. Covell dismissed the question of political government with the suggestion, obviously borrowed from Harrington, that it should consist of a magistracy "to hold the balance between all sorts of People".

(II) SCHEMES FOR UNIFICATION

On a lower, but more accessible plane than the Utopias came various schemes for the establishment of a more effective unity in social and economic affairs. The unity of the Middle Ages, which had depended upon a religious conception of society, was dead, and that of the modern world, which depends largely on practical convenience and mechanical devices, had not yet developed. Cromwell always cherished the hope of a Protestant alliance, which would transcend national boundaries, and it was with this object in view that he despatched Dury and Whitelocke on missions to the Protestant countries of Europe. But the day of international alliances founded upon a religious basis was past, and Cromwell was met at every turn by the hard facts of national independence and secular interest. There was more hope for the projects of national unification which derived their justification mainly from practical necessity. Social and political divisions had been accentuated by the recent religious controversies, and one writer declared that some method of composing these divisions had become absolutely essential. "For it is nothing but diversity of interests," he said, "that breaks us in pieces and crumbles us into so many different traditions and designs, which as it was good policy in our monarchs so but bad prudence in a Commonwealth."¹²

Samuel Hartlib was one of the keenest advocates of the necessity for greater unification, and he declared that it should be the aim of the central government "to look not only upon the outward parts, but as it were upon the very anatomy of all the inmost bowels of the Church and State". He proposed, on his own responsibility, to establish an Office of Addresses "for the Relief of Human Necessities", which would be divided into two branches, the one to deal with material and the other with spiritual needs. The former, known as the Office of Addresses for Accommodations, was intended for a sort of labour exchange, where masters and

servants could come to terms and where merchants could meet to transact business. Though this organization would benefit everyone, it would be specially useful in enabling the poor to find employment and making it possible for the authorities to distinguish the industrious from the idle. The Office of Addresses for Communications was to deal with man's spiritual and mental needs, paying special attention to the natural sciences, and generally organizing the world of thought. Both these offices would be maintained by the state, "for," says Hartlib, "as it is just, so it is necessary, that employments which redound to the benefit of all should be maintained by the public revenues."¹³

In another pamphlet, Hartlib developed further his scheme for an Office of Public Addresses. Pointing out that the aim of society was mutual help, he showed how his organization would further this aim by bringing together conflicting interests and aspirations and helping them to find a common ground. The poor, in particular, would be benefited, for, says Hartlib, the main cause of poverty is unemployment, "and the cause why they want employment is either they cannot find masters to employ them or partly because there is little work stirring in the commonwealth for them". Now, under Hartlib's scheme, masters and servants would be brought together and made to realize each other's needs, while, by the systematic observation of national resources, new avenues of employment would be opened up. At the projected Office were kept various registers, of which the most important was that which dealt with the needs of the poor. Here were collected all the schemes which had been suggested for their employment, and here also was a list of all would-be benefactors and physicians who were willing to give their services free. The register of commercial dealings was a boon to merchants, who would also be able to glean information at the Office as to the state of the exchanges. Lastly, there was a register of "ingenuities" and works of art. Hartlib concluded the pamphlet by once more stressing the value of his organization, not only to private individuals, but also to the rulers of the country, who would be enabled thereby to get a telescopic view of existing conditions and devise schemes for reform.¹⁴

In 1647 a notice appeared, which is unsigned, but was probably written by Hartlib. It begins by declaring that the life of all intercourse is quickness of return, but that the necessary speed cannot be attained without improved

organization, "the several occasions of private Men being for the most part unknown to others." As a remedy, the Office of Public Addresses has been set up. Several branches have been erected in and near London and Westminster, to which men may come to give or seek information of the most varied kind as to lands, merchandise, servants, and other necessities of life. A list of these branches follows, and it is stated that the "Undertakers of the Office of Public Addresses", who are responsible for the work performed there, have arranged to publish a weekly book of information, which will be on sale in all the stationers' shops.¹⁵

The Office of Addresses and Encounters, which H. Robinson claimed to have erected in 1650 in Threadneedle Street,¹⁶ was concerned almost solely with the supply of material necessities. Robinson was a London merchant and a well-known writer of economic treatises,¹⁷ and it was natural that he should take a more specialized view of the functions of his office than Hartlib had done. He pointed out that, just as merchants needed an exchange where they could meet and compare rates, so other citizens needed some sort of meeting-place where they could make their needs known to each other. Robinson anticipated the modern universal stores in his provision for all manner of human desires. Buyers and sellers of all kinds could be accommodated, money lent out or received at interest, situations ranging from a professorship to a position in domestic service could be found, and the poor informed of sources of relief. Last, but not least, those who "desire to dispose of themselves or friends in marriage may here likewise be informed what encounters are to be had, both of persons and portions". But it was as a labour exchange that Robinson expected his office to perform its most useful functions. He stated that a great deal of poverty arose simply through the fact that the unemployed were not brought into contact with those employers who needed more labour.¹⁸ If these two classes were brought together, both unemployment and the necessity for casual labour would cease to exist. When workmen were in constant employment they would be able to take lower wages, and this, in its turn, would enable merchants and shopkeepers to dispose of their goods more cheaply, "which would be the life of trade." Then, too, the Office was destined to perform one of the functions of a modern trade union by protecting workmen from the consequences of unorganized labour hunting. Robinson remarked that a principal cause

for the payment of inadequate wages was the poor workman's ignorance of the conditions of the labour market.¹⁹

(III) EDUCATIONAL REFORM

At one time, it was supposed that before the burst of activity in the nineteenth century English education had had a dull and uneventful history, broken only by the foundations of Edward VI, which sometimes seem to have been as many as the beds in which Elizabeth slept. A. F. Leach has, however, exploded Edward's enviable reputation and shown that he destroyed more schools than he founded.²⁰ Nor does it seem true to say that the nineteenth century saw the earliest projects for a system of state-aided, universal education, framed with the intention of developing the possibilities of the ordinary citizen. Under the Commonwealth, came the climax of a growing enthusiasm for education, which was one aspect of the popularization of Renaissance ideals. Statistics show that the number of endowed schools founded in the hundred years between 1501 and 1601 was 185, while in the fifty years between 1601 and 1651 it was 186.²¹ More significant, however, was the interest shown by reformers in the ends and methods of education, and the support given by the Government to educational development.

Between 1640 and 1660 various aspects of reform were considered. There was first the question as to how far the existing educational establishments met the needs of the people, and here there seems little doubt that both reformers and Governments contemplated extensive alterations. At the top of the scale came the Universities, of which William Harrison said in 1586 that, whereas they had been created for poor men's sons, now it was these very men who had the greatest difficulty in entering them.²² Neither secondary nor elementary education had been materially advanced by the Revival of Learning, for the grammar schools which were founded were merely the successors of a still greater number which had existed in the Middle Ages, while the equivalents of our elementary schools were few in number and unimportant in kind. The type of learning which prevailed at these establishments did not atone for their other deficiencies. The schools naturally adapted themselves to the curriculum of the Universities, which was, in effect, the mediaeval course in arts, the old Trivium and Quadrivium.²³

It was not surprising that a century which witnessed the discoveries of Napier, Harvey, and Descartes should begin to chafe against the dead hand of the past which still held the orthodox places of learning in its grip.

The educational literature of the Interregnum period is considerable, and indicates that men were generally interested in the subject. From the point of view of the liberal reformer, not primarily concerned with education, the influence of schools was shown to be important. In describing the features of an ideal government, Hartlib declared that "the right ordering of their schools is to be looked upon as the main foundation of a Reformed Commonwealth, without which no other work of Reformation will ever be effectual".²⁴ Dury advised men to look well to the reformation of schools, which was the "seed-plot of all other Reformation in the Church, in offices of Judicature and of other public trusts throughout the Commonwealth".²⁵ S. Harmar pointed out that a well-governed school would help to produce good citizens,²⁶ while, to Milton, a complete and generous education was that which enabled a man "to perform justly, skilfully, and magnanimously all the offices both private and public of peace and war".²⁷

According to the reformers, existing methods of education tended to produce men who might be good scholars but were inadequate as human beings and citizens. Comenius declared that the failure of the learned to succeed in the ordinary business of life was so well known that it had given rise to the proverbial expression, "a good scholar and a bad Commonwealth man." Instead, the exact opposite should be the case, and "the school ought to prepare us for things incident to our lives". The truth was, said Comenius, that the present methods of education needed drastic reformation. They made learning unattractive and difficult to attain, and they did not relate it to the problems of life.²⁸ One of the main criticisms brought by the Commonwealth reformers against the schools was their failure to appreciate the sensationalist psychology, which, though made famous in the world of thought by Locke, was not applied to education until the nineteenth century. Milton noticed that it was usual for schools to begin their instruction with the "most intellective abstractions of Logick and metaphysicks", instead of with subjects which made an appeal to the senses,²⁹ and Comenius declared that one of the points which made learning unattractive was the teachers' failure to present

things directly to the "very hands and eyes of those that are learners". The children were bored with long and dreary discourses which they could neither understand nor remember, and thus they acquired a distaste for learning which they never lost. Before this state of affairs could be altered, the teacher would have to change his methods, and "present everything to its proper senses, visible things to the eyes, things that may be tasted to the palate, and so for the rest. For by once looking upon an elephant or at least upon his picture, a man shall more easily and firmly apprehend him from that than if it had been told him ten times over."³⁰ William Petty declared that to teach a child to read and write about matters of which he had no actual knowledge was to put the cart before the horse. Such a method presupposed the possession of a critical faculty which children did not possess in any high degree, although they usually had good memories and perceptions.³¹

Apart from its difficulty and dullness, the reformers considered that the existing curriculum was trivial. Comenius complained that, after spending a good part of their youth in "Grammatical, Rhetorical and Logical Toyes", most men set about the business of life in real earnest, glad to forget the useless years behind them. The way to remedy this was to make "serious exercises the preparatives of serious employments", and to introduce children, while still at school, to the happenings and problems of ordinary life.³² Petty proposed to teach all children some mechanical art as well as reading and writing, and he planned to set up a College of Trade, where at least one representative of every trade would be given a handsome dwelling rent free. At this College, new inventions would be "more frequent than new fashions of clothes and household stuff", while its resources would afford ample opportunities for writing a history of trade or for evolving "that interpretation of nature whereof there is so little, and that so bad as yet extant in the world". Within the College, there would be a *theatrum botanicum* and a sort of Zoo, with stalls and cages for beasts and birds and ponds for fishes. Rare models of engines and designs of gardens and buildings would be deposited there, and there was to be a library, an observatory, plots of ground for agricultural experiments and galleries where paintings and statues might be kept. "And so far as is possible, we would have this place to be the epitome or abstract of the whole world; so that a man conversant within its walls

would certainly prove a greater scholar than the walking libraries so-called, although he could neither read nor write." Petty also had a plan for a hospital where mathematicians, physicians, and surgeons might give and receive instruction. The young medical student would have opportunities for research, while he would learn the practical side of his profession by accompanying the surgeon as he went from patient to patient. In conclusion, it was to be noted that a practical education would be far more nearly in accordance with the average boy's natural bent than the study of abstruse writings, which he did not even want to understand.³³

Most of the reformers aimed at bringing about a synthesis of the whole field of knowledge, which would give meaning and dignity to specialized studies, and would break down national barriers by uniting the scholars of all countries. In dealing with this latter aspect of a universal organization of learning, Comenius reminded his readers of the wars and rumours of wars which at present divided and disturbed Europe. "For so extraordinary a disease," he said, "there is every need of an extraordinary universal remedy; viz. of the reducement of men's minds into some universal concord."³⁴ He also looked at the question from the point of view of the scholar. At present, each man set to work on his particular bit of ground without any knowledge of what others had done in the same field. Such a method was clearly wasteful and unproductive, for "he deprives himself of hands and eyes . . . who neglecteth or rejecteth anything which may be known".³⁵ To further this ideal of unity, Comenius proposed to set up a Pansophic College, wherein all sorts of learning could be brought together. The College was divided into seven parts, beginning with a threshold and gate, "wherein the general kinds of all things together with their frames and laws are represented to us, and that chiefly by the help of such common notions as are inbred in human minds." In the fourth stage, the middle court of the College, "the reasonable creature Man stands forth to be seen with all things that either are or may be effected by human understanding," while in the seventh and last stage man is shown that all knowledge leads ultimately to God.³⁶ Petty, with his more practical mind, translated the Pansophic College into an Office of Public Addresses. Here, by virtue of mutual assistance, men's attempts at invention would be no longer "so many scattered coals or firebrands," but would be fused into an effective whole. Petty described the actual

history of a good many modern inventions when he remarked that while one man might have an ingenious design in his head and no money with which to develop it, another man would have the money but no ingenuity. By means of his Office, these two would be brought together and made to supply each other's needs.³⁷ The imperfect draft of a project of Cromwell's for erecting a new college at Oxford shows the same desire to bring about a synthesis of knowledge, though it was of religious knowledge that the Protector was mainly thinking. According to the proposed scheme, voluntary subscriptions were to be raised with which to endow St. Mary's Hall at Oxford. £1,000 yearly would be paid out of the College revenue to ten men, who were to make a "generall Synopsis of the true reformed Protestant Christian Religion professed in this Commonwealth", which would then be circulated among the foreign churches.³⁸

The Commonwealth reformers had no intention of confining the benefit of their improvements to an intellectual or social aristocracy. In his *Didactica Magna*, Comenius declared that, as with God there is no respect of persons, "if we admit some to intellectual culture, excluding others, we wrong not only those who have the same nature as ourselves, but we also wrong God."³⁹ Petty intended that all children over seven should be instructed in reading and writing, together with some useful art. He expressly stipulated that none should be excluded on the score of poverty, "for hereby it hath come to pass that many are now holding the plough which might have been made fit to steer the State."⁴⁰ John Dury put forward a scheme for grading schools and distributing the children among them according to their birth or natural abilities. First, came the "vulgar" school, for the ordinary run of people, then what was probably a sort of grammar school for the nobility and gentry, "whereunto also the most Gentile spirits of the vulgar ought to be received." After this, came the "school of humane and naturall perfections", which seems to have been equivalent to a university, and then a still higher stage known as the "school of Prophets".⁴¹ The author of *Chaos* outlined a system of parochial and grammar schools. Every parish was to have a schoolmaster who would teach all the children from seven to fourteen to read, write, and do accounts. After this, they were either to be taught a trade or sent on to the grammar school, one of which was to be set up in every town.⁴² In *Gloucestershire's Desire*, Harmar stressed the need

for the work of "generall schooling". He wished to educate all the children in a parish, "as well the poor as the rich", and he thought that the minimum of instruction should comprise reading, writing, and the principles of religion.⁴³

From the foregoing pamphlets it is clear that the years 1640-60 witnessed a surprisingly enlightened discussion of the scope and methods of education, but Comenius and Hartlib, two of the main disputants, were foreigners,⁴⁴ and thus it might seem at first sight that the pamphleteers' enthusiasm had no deep roots in native soil. Petitions and manifestos, however, combined with the policy of the Government, afford clear evidence of spontaneous enthusiasm for education on the part of at least a certain section of the English people. In 1649, an address from the people of Lincoln to the Lord Fairfax and the Council of War was published in the *Perfect Diurnall*. They asked that "some Public Schools for the better education and principling of youth" might be established, so that children should no longer be left entirely to the uncertain mercies of their parents. The petitioners pointed out that unless the present generation laid careful foundations for the future, it would itself be in danger of destruction, "through negligence of not timely preparing fit materials to support and confirm it."⁴⁵ The *Moderate Intelligencer* also displayed an interest in education, agreeing with the pamphleteers that the instruction given in schools should bear a closer relation to after life. For instance, those who were intended for a public career should be educated with that end in view. It would be far better for such men to concentrate on the problems of statecraft, the laws of their own and other countries, and the use of arms, than to spend their time on the study of the languages and laws of forgotten civilizations.⁴⁶ A broadside published in 1646 proposed that £400,000 should be borrowed on the security of the bishops' temporalities, and devoted to the task of "breeding up children in learning." In addition, "a glorious university" might be founded in London, and every bishop's residence converted into a replica of Eton College.⁴⁷ Among the letters addressed to Cromwell, there is an unsigned petition asking that "children might be trained upp in the way they should goe; . . . that free-schools might be erected in every county . . . and a competent salary provided for sober and godly Schoolmasters . . ."⁴⁸ Though the "courtly academies" sponsored

by Sir Balthazar Gerbier were very different from the elementary and grammar schools advocated by the reformers, their establishment indicates some general interest in learning. In 1649, Gerbier published a broadside, informing "all Fathers of Noble Families and Lovers of Virtue" that he had erected an academy where people of any age might be instructed in the particular branch of learning most suitable to their genius.⁴⁹ A notice was also inserted in the newspapers to the effect that Gerbier's free lectures in his Academy in Whitefriars would begin immediately after three o'clock in the afternoon, and those who had any interesting information to impart were urged to do so by means of "publique gratis lectures from which none are excluded".⁵⁰

The intervention of the state is perhaps the most interesting feature of the educational history of the time. In this respect, the Commonwealth reformers went far beyond the philanthropic zeal for education which was displayed by men of the later eighteenth century, and anticipated the policy of the nineteenth century. Several of the pamphleteers suggested that state intervention was necessary and justifiable. Dury said that the Government should take an active part in his designs for reforming schools, since educational improvements were a necessary preliminary to all other reform.⁵¹ Petty's insistence that all children over seven should receive an education involved the necessity for some financial assistance in the case of the poor,⁵² while Harmar explicitly stated that, as the Government rated men's estates for poor relief, so it should rate them for the purpose of education.⁵³

The history of Government intervention from 1640-60 shows that this view of public responsibility was not confined to the pamphleteers. It has sometimes been supposed that the Puritans of the Commonwealth period had little sympathy with intellectual or artistic pursuits. In a sense, this is true, for they found it impossible to regard art as an end in itself, and never escaped from the implications of the thought that they lived "for ever in the Great Taskmaster's eye". But though religion and morality occupied the foremost place in their minds, they wished to convert men partly through the medium of their intelligence. This desire, in conjunction with the humanitarian doctrines which characterized such men as Cromwell and Milton, predisposed the Commonwealth Governments to

lend a ready ear to projects of educational reform. The House of Commons stated in 1641 that: "This House intends to vindicate themselves from the imputation laid upon them of Discouraging of Learning; and that they will advance Learning and the Maintenance of preaching Ministers."⁵⁴ In 1642 Comenius, the Bohemian educational enthusiast and friend of Hartlib, visited London, and, according to his own account, the visit took place at Parliament's instigation. He says, "They communicated also beforehand their thoughts of assigning to us some College with its revenues, whereby a certain number of learned and industrious men, called from all nations, might be honourably maintained, either for a term of years or in perpetuity." Various places in and near London were mentioned, "so that nothing seemed more certain than the design of the great Verulam, concerning the opening somewhere of a Universal College, devoted to the advancement of Science, should be carried out." Then came the Irish rebellion, and Parliament was occupied with more urgent matters.⁵⁵ Though nothing more was heard of Comenius's design, the Government's attitude towards Hartlib and Dury, the other two educational enthusiasts, was significant. Dury worked in the closest alliance with Cromwell, and was sent by him on missions to the Protestant countries of Europe. Hartlib received a grant of £100 from the Commons in 1646,⁵⁶ and a year later the Committee for Advancing Monies was ordered to pay him £300, "in consideration of his good deserts and great services to Parliament." The Committee for Oxford University was told to consider his deserts "both from this Parliament, and from all that are Well wishers to the Advancement of Learning," and to recommend him to some place of benefit in the University.⁵⁷ How far this recognition of Hartlib's services was due to any concrete achievement is uncertain, but it indicates the attitude of Parliament towards the educational reformers. Again, in 1643, they resolved to appoint a Committee for the Advancement of Learning, which was to receive all propositions tending thereto.⁵⁸

The educational policy of the Government was two-fold. In the first place, it attempted to regulate universities and schools and eliminate "scandaious" schoolmasters. In 1654 an ordinance was passed, appointing visitors for Oxford and Cambridge, who were told to consider the best way of governing the Universities and Colleges, "for the

better Advancement, Countenance, and Encouragement of Piety and learning." Visitors for Westminster School were also appointed.⁵⁹ The well-known ordinance for ejecting "scandalous" ministers extended also to schoolmasters. It was stated that, since "by the continuance of divers scandalous and insufficient Ministers and Schoolmasters in many Churches, Chappels, and Publique Schools within this nation, the more effectual Propagation of the Gospel and settlement of a godly and painful Ministry is much obstructed", it had been decided to appoint commissioners for the various counties, with power to call before them all parsons, schoolmasters, and lecturers who had neglected their duties or were unfit for them. Both ministers and schoolmasters were to keep their vicarages and schools in repair, under pain of forfeiture.⁶⁰ The ordinance which set up a commission of Triers to examine intending ministers did not apply explicitly to schoolmasters, but since part of the Ejectors' duty was to inform the Triers of schoolmasters who had evaded their clutches, it seems clear that they were included in the phrase "and others" which occurs in the ordinance.⁶¹ There is some evidence that these ordinances were administered,⁶² and, taken together, they must have constituted a fairly comprehensive system of Government control.

In the matter of state aid to education, the Commonwealth Governments were equally advanced. The Commons resolved in 1641 that all the lands taken by forfeiture from the Deans and Chapters should be employed for the advance of learning and piety,⁶³ but, in this instance, it seems likely that the bulk of the proceeds was devoted to piety rather than to learning.⁶⁴ The Propagation Act, which applied to Wales and the North, declared that, in order to secure good men for the ministry, "and that fit persons of approved Piety and learning may have encouragement to employ themselves in the education of children in piety and good literature," commissioners were to be appointed to grant certificates to itinerant ministers and schoolmasters. These teachers were to be provided for out of the proceeds from sequestered estates, the yearly maintenance of a minister not to exceed £100 or that of a schoolmaster £40.⁶⁵ In Wales, where its results have been investigated, the Act was followed by the foundation of more than sixty free schools,⁶⁶ which, despite their disappearance at the Restoration, may have exercised some influence on succeeding reforms.

A series of smaller grants was made with the specific purpose of furthering education. In 1658, the Protector declared that the Highlanders were suffering from lack of education as well as from lack of religion. Therefore, "finding it a duty not only to have the Gospel set up, but schools for children erected and maintained," the Protector and Council appropriated £1,200 to be devoted by the Scottish Council to education. The money was to be raised out of the rents of church lands which had formerly been devoted to the maintenance of "Popish officers."⁶⁷ Though English education did not receive a single grant of this magnitude, there were several instances of bequests to special schools and schoolmasters. The inhabitants of Grimston in Norfolk presented a petition to the Protector, saying that there were in and near Grimston one hundred families, half of which were unable to read, and that within four miles there were forty other villages all without a schoolmaster. The school at Grimston, which had been erected twenty years ago, had now fallen into decay, but "in order that learning might not be altogether discountenanced", the petitioners had provided a well-affected schoolmaster and now intended to repair the school. They begged for a grant which would enable them to carry on the work with increased vigour. Five signatures followed, together with a certificate by eight justices of the peace that Grimston was poor but populous, and that the new schoolmaster was a suitable man for the place. An Order in Council recommended the Trustees for Ministers to settle £30 a year on the Grimston schoolmaster.⁶⁸ In 1657, an income of twenty marks was settled on a Rochester schoolmaster,⁶⁹ and a schoolmaster of Beere, in Dorset, received a similar grant.⁷⁰ The master of the free school at Bridport was given £15 10s. 6d.,⁷¹ while the petition of the inhabitants of an East Riding parish for an income of £38 to maintain a free school there was recommended to the Trustees for Ministers.⁷²

There was considerable enthusiasm for University education at this time, and for an extension of its benefits beyond the limits of Oxford and Cambridge. Dury complained that, by their unique position, these two foundations were apt to exercise a narrowing influence. He said: "I would not have that counted an Honor due unto them, that they alone should monopolize all means of Learning, as if without the formalities and constitutions of old settled in them,

there could be no truth of Learning.”⁷³ London, Durham, and York were all suggested as possible centres of advanced learning. In 1647, the inhabitants of Yorkshire and the north petitioned that “Liberty may be granted and Means allowed for laying the Foundations of a University within York for educating scholars in all learning which may fit them for the discharging of their ministerial functions in the church . . .” The petitioners remarked that the difficulty of securing learned ministers proved that the older Universities were not sufficient to provide for the country’s needs.⁷⁴

Nothing more is heard of Yorkshire’s aspirations, but a more effective agitation was set on foot by the people of Durham. In March, 1650, Cromwell wrote to Lenthall that he had been told by the Mayor and citizens of Durham that their petition, asking for the houses of the late Dean and Chapter to be turned into “a College or School of Literature”, had been referred to the Committee for Obstructions.⁷⁵ Cromwell remarked that he knew the committee intended to report favourably on the project, but, since the people of Durham had asked for his help, he would urge them to report as soon as possible. “Truly,” he said, “it seems to me a matter of great concernment and importance, as that which, by the blessing of God, may much conduce to the promoting of learning and piety in those poor, rude, and ignorant parts . . .”⁷⁶ Sir Arthur Haslerig reported from the committee in 1651 that the site belonging to the late Dean and Chapter comprised about six acres, and that most of the dwellings were uninhabited. It was situated in “a pleasant place and healthful air; and where is Plenty of Provisions”. It would be a very suitable place in which to erect a college, and the committee thought that “the same will be a pious and laudable Work, and of very great Use for the Northern Parts”.⁷⁷

Though the formal grant of a college did not take place till 1656, some sort of grant seems to have been made almost at once. In January, 1652, a second application was made to Parliament from the Grand Jury of Durham. They thanked Parliament for its goodness in founding a college there, but went on to say that, “for the better encouragement of men of piety and good parts, and support of those not able to maintaine themselves,” they had already petitioned for a “competent revenue in lands”, to be granted

in consideration of a debt due from the state. They also suggested that a "competent number of worthie and faithfull gentlemen" in the county should be appointed commissioners for establishing the said college.⁷⁸ Again, in the spring of 1653 the inhabitants of the county of Durham presented a petition to the Lord General and Council of Officers, saying that on receiving a declaration from his Excellency they "were at first like men in a dreame, and could hardly believe for rejoyceing, to see the wonderfull goodnes and kindness of God, in renueing a remembrance of your former engagements for this poore nation. . . ." ⁷⁹

In the early months of 1656 the college was definitely established. A Committee composed of Rous, Lambert, and Montagu was set up to consider the project, and reported in its favour,⁸⁰ and, on their recommendation, it was ordered that the houses belonging to the late Dean and Chapter should be vested in trustees for the use of the college. £282 4s. 4d. yearly was granted as a means of support to three "godly and able preachers" who were members of the college, and after the lease of certain manors had expired, £500 yearly would be vested in the trustees.⁸¹ A committee was appointed to prepare rules and statutes for the new foundation,⁸² and in April, 1656, another committee was appointed to receive the free contributions towards its upkeep, which "many of quality in that and the adjacent counties" had expressed their readiness to make.⁸³ The letters patent granted by Cromwell repeated most of the provisions of the various orders, and appointed visitors for the college, including Lambert, Strickland, Fairfax, and Haslerig.⁸⁴

When Richard Cromwell became Protector, the newly-erected college presented him with a petition in which they explained that they had been inaugurated just before Cromwell died, "wherein this new erection was left an orphan scarce bound up in its swaddling cloathes." ⁸⁵ A historian of Durham, writing in 1785, says that "this orphan college thrived apace; it endeavoured to confer degrees, and mimic its grown-up sisters of Oxford and Cambridge, who checked its presumptions by petitions to the new Protector. But in less than two years, the ill-patched machine of Government fell to pieces, and with it this new seminary for knowledge." ⁸⁶

Though the foundation of Durham College is the most striking instance of the Government's activity in the sphere

of higher education, some encouragement was given to the Scottish Universities. In March, 1657, a committee reported on a petition from the Principal of Glasgow University, which stated that under His Highness's favour the University had so much improved that it had become necessary to build new rooms, the cost of which would be approximately £2,500. The Principal asked for assistance, not only in this matter, but also in erecting "several professions" and in increasing the library.⁸⁷ Later in the same year, R. Leighton presented a petition on behalf of Edinburgh college. He stated that on 8th August, 1654, the Protector had passed an ordinance for the better support of the Scotch Universities, and had conferred on Glasgow and Aberdeen a "liberal annuity" for the help of poor students, expressing at that time his intention of extending his generosity to the Edinburgh college.⁸⁸

(IV) THE REFORM OF THE LAW

The triumph of the Parliamentary cause was also the triumph of the common law over prerogative power. But "equality before the law" may be a high-sounding phrase, which conceals great actual inequality, putting the poor and ignorant at a disadvantage as compared with the rich and well-informed and resulting in more practical abuses than a system of arbitrary decrees. The liberal reformers of the Commonwealth had no hesitation in condemning many of the existing features and practices both of the common law and of equity, and Cromwell put the reformation of the law in the forefront of his programme.⁸⁹ "But," said he, "the sons of Zeruiah are yet too strong for us; and we cannot mention the reformation of the law, but they presently cry out, we design to destroy propriety; whereas the law, as it is now constituted, serves only to maintain the lawyers, and to encourage the rich to oppress the poor. . . ." ⁹⁰ George Fox included the law and its officers among the chief evils of society which called for redress. He says: "I saw the Lawyers black, their black robe as a puddle, and like unto a black pit, almost covered over with blackness. . . ." ⁹¹

In 1649, a protest was published by the Levellers in the name of "divers well-affected persons" in the City of London, which declared that, while all other monopolies had been abolished, the superfluous grants and patents to

“several impertinent Officers” in the Courts of Justice still existed. While the petitioners did not approve of the rumoured abolition of all existing law, they were in favour of drastic reform. They wished to remove all feudal tenures and rights to hold courts, and to divide the administration of justice between the county courts and Westminster. The laws were to be translated into English and annotated, “to the end the Law may be certaine and not ambiguous as formerly.” Great offices, such as the head “Registers,” Examiners, and Masters of Chancery, should be abolished, together with all other “grand Monopolies and Pattentees in all Courts of the Kingdome”. The present custom of primogeniture was to cease, the eldest son having two-thirds of the estate, and the rest being divided equally among the other children. Imprisonment for debt should be abolished, and, instead, the debtor’s estate should become liable.⁹²

Another pamphlet, published in the same year, treated the question of law reform from a theoretical standpoint. Rather in the vein of Montesquieu, the writer declares that, “At the foundation of governments, justice was in men, before it came to be in laws ; for the only rule of government to good princes was their own wills.” It soon became necessary to limit the ruler’s power by means of definite laws, but corrupt interests were strong enough to make the laws mere tools of despotism. In England, the dividing line came at the Norman conquest, when William deliberately followed his own interests and disregarded the old laws, and ever since then the interest of the mighty has been the distinguishing mark of our legislation. At present, the law is worse than useless to the poor man. “Who knows not that the web of the law entangles the small flies and dismisseth the great, so that a mite of equity is worth a whole bundle of law.” Yet, despite the apparent hopelessness of the present situation, men carry within themselves the means of reformation. “The minds of men are great wheels of things ; thence come changes and alterations in the world ; teeming freedom exerts and puts forth itself ; the unjust world would suppress its appearance ; many fall in this conflict, but freedom will at last prevail and gives law to all things.” But the people should not forget that Reason is the only criterion by which laws should be judged, and that free consent does not necessarily produce good laws.⁹³

William Cole, writing in 1659, attributed all present troubles to the bad effects of the Norman conquest. Ever

since then, our laws had been made by the King, Lords, and gentry, who carried on a process of mutual back-scratching. It was all to the gentry's interest to maintain laws which oppressed the poor, for thereby "not only their own tenants but other poor that live near them must run, and go, and work, and obey them as they shall please to command them. . . ." Many abuses arose from the employment of professional lawyers, who did not know the true circumstances of the case. If courts of merchants were necessary, as many believed, to try commercial controversies, the same was true in the case of other occupations, and Cole therefore argued that the old Hundred Courts should be revived.⁹⁴

Certain aspects of legal administration attracted special attention, and during the Commonwealth there was much discussion of the question of Chancery reform. One of the original functions of Chancery and other Courts of Equity had been to rectify those abuses which arose from the unequal social and economic position of litigants, but contemporaries insisted that their procedure had gradually become so long, complicated, and expensive, that they ruined more men than they helped. One pamphlet stated that suitors had become "almost distracted in mind" by the delays and unnecessary charges which they had undergone, since registrars and order writers deliberately prolonged the agony in order to make money. It was suggested that no motion or petition should be made in any court of equity before the matter had been put into writing, and a copy sent to the plaintiff, who would then return his answer. Not until this form of negotiation had failed were the parties to have recourse to Chancery.⁹⁵ Captain Nathaniel Burt declared that some men had sued in Chancery for fourteen years, and were no nearer obtaining justice than when they first began. Rich men could afford to laugh at this ruinous procedure, but the poor suitor was utterly undone.⁹⁶ Another writer compared the successive orders in Chancery to so many vipers, which continually devoured each other, "and one cause of £40 value produceth at the least 700 severall orders before it be determined, and the expense of that suite (on the Plaintiff's part only) amounts unto £500 at the least."⁹⁷

Widespread agitation also took place for the reform of the common law, and in particular for the reform of the law of debt. This law was both harsh and inefficient, for, having deprived the debtor of all possibility of repayment by throwing him into prison, it kept him there till the arrival

of the problematical date on which his debt could be paid. In a *Dialogue between a Debtor and Prisoner*, the latter declares that if he had been allowed a bare six months' freedom he could have paid his debts. Imprisonment was a device which had been invented by the lawyers for their own ends, and was otherwise completely useless.⁹⁸ In another pamphlet, the writer declared that in the matter of paying their debts the prisoners were "so farre disabled as from Heaven to pull a starre".⁹⁹ One pamphleteer pointed out that the liberty of the subject, for which Parliament and the country were supposed to have fought, was an empty mockery to the poor debtor.¹⁰⁰ The women prayed that the "Norman yoke" of perpetual imprisonment for debt might be abolished, and complained that the prisons were merely places of sanctuary to wilful, obstinate debtors, and "cruel slaughter houses" to the poor men who were ready to pay their debts if they were given a chance.¹⁰¹ T. Grantham, a Northamptonshire minister, held that imprisonment for debt was contrary to the laws of God and Nature, and achieved neither the true end of punishment nor the repayment of the creditor. "If any man shall say, I neither arrest him to punish him nor to make him an example, but for my money, I confesse that's allowed if he have money to pay," he conceded, "but if he have it not, 'tis diabolicall."¹⁰²

English debtors were said to be in a far worse position than those of other countries.¹⁰³ It was reported that in Germany and elsewhere, prisons were regularly inspected, and reformers pointed out that there was no reason why this system should not be introduced into England. A certain number of "able and godly men" might be appointed in each town to visit the prisons weekly, investigate the reasons why men had been imprisoned for debt, and inquire on oath as to their ability to pay. Those prisoners who were well off, but made prison their sanctuary, were to be forced to pay two-thirds of their estates to their creditors and would then be released, while those who were genuinely poor should be released at once.¹⁰⁴ A similar scheme for the inspection of prisons is attributed to the City Government in 1649. It was reported that they had asked Parliament to take some speedy course to prevent the injustice and oppression practised by gaolers and other officers, and had suggested that commissioners should be appointed in the various counties to inspect the prisons. These men were

to report the "number and quality of all Prisoners with their crimes and causes of detention, that upon such Report, the Parliament may best consider how to show mercy to some and justice to others, with some better provision for the soules and bodies of all those that shall be detained in Prison".¹⁰⁵ The churches in Norfolk and Norwich petitioned the Protector that courts of judicature might be set up in every county, and that "a sufficient number of honest men" might be appointed to hear and determine all matters of debt and difference which did not involve more than £———. ¹⁰⁶

The widespread agitation for reform of the law of debt was caused mainly by the extreme inefficiency of existing regulations. The attempt to reform the criminal law was actuated partly by the humanistic tendencies which were in the air, and partly by a surprisingly modern conception of the relation between economic conditions and crime. A realization of the supreme importance of every individual was part of the Puritan doctrine, and Samuel Chidley, who wrote a series of tracts on law reform, declared that human life had a unique value, "the jewel of one man's life all your estates cannot balance." To inflict the death penalty merely for stealing was to sin against God and human reason. "And whereas they object that it is the law of the land to put thieves to death for stealing to the value of 13½d., I answer: that no law is to be observed, if it be against the law of God, especially in the taking away of men's lives." Excessively severe laws had not even the virtue of efficacy, for they led on the one hand to the perpetration of double crimes, and on the other to non-execution of the law. "This murdering law is the cause wherefore many murders are committed by robbers in the act of stealing; for the thieves know it is a hanging matter to steal, and it is no more to commit murder."¹⁰⁷ Other reformers agreed with Chidley that men should not lose their lives except for murder. They were "precious before God and man, and ought not to be destroyed for trifles, as many have cruelly and unhumanely been taken away". Alternative punishments could easily be devised which would have a greater deterrent effect than the death penalty.¹⁰⁸ Mr. Herring told the Parliament that it was lamentable that "poor, silly, ignorant people, that steal for necessity, should be hanged and go to Hell; whereas, if life were spared, and slavery inflicted, they might in tyme doe God and their country service".¹⁰⁹

Chidley's most original contribution to the problem of law reform was his contention that crime was brought about as much by economic necessity as by deliberate wickedness. In common with many reformers of to-day, he refused to admit that there were some men who were born to be hanged. He told the commissioners of oyer and terminer and gaol delivery at Newgate that he had noticed that the persons who were arraigned before them were "poor labourers and such creatures, who stole things of a small value, peradventure for mere necessity; yet you arraign them for their lives when the law of God requireth their preservation in such a way that they may make satisfaction. . . . But they are great sinners indeed that rob men of their precious lives; and the worst of men are such as despise and destroy thieves that steal merely to satisfy hunger". According to Chidley, the harshness of the laws was due largely to men's covetousness and fear of losing their worldly possessions. Even the greatest men "have not so much faith as to trust God with their substance, but use indirect means to make uncertain riches certain, as may appear by putting thieves to death for stealing".¹¹⁰ W. Pryor also attributed theft and murder to economic causes. He described the way in which great men obtained complete control over the lives and liberties of their inferiors "by which men are exposed to misery and want, which is the cause of theft". When they have reduced their victims to this state, they make a law that if men steal they shall be hanged: "So they necessitate them to steal by tyranny, and then hang them for it, and this begets animosity, secret hatred, seeking for revenge, the product of which is murder."¹¹¹ Another writer thought that imprisonment was a cause rather than an effect of economic servitude. "Frequent imprisonment," he said, "is an effect of exorbitant power, by which, sooner than by any other means, plain and mean people are brought to stoop to the wills of the mighty; it being the way to destroy them, their wives, and families, by keeping from their trades, husbandry and other callings; and hath served more than any one thing to break the spirits of the people. . . ." ¹¹²

Both Chidley and Herring ¹¹³ thought that the best way to punish thieves was to set them to some form of hard labour. Chidley suggested that they should be transported to the plantations, where they would probably do very well, "for generally the wittiest rogues are the greatest cut-purses." But anything would be better than shutting them up in

prisons, "where they learn to be worse than before." Chidley went on to emphasize his belief that prisons created more criminals than they cured. He says: "I took notice of a passage of the lord chief-justice Rolle, and it was well observed, How that thieves are honest before they come in gaol, and there they become naught, and learn to lye by saying 'Not Guilty', when they had confessed it before."¹¹⁴

Of all the liberal projects, that of law reform made the strongest appeal to Parliament. The battle cry of Pym and Hampden had been the supremacy of the common law, and their successors seem to have been moved by a genuine desire to remove its worst defects. In 1646, when a committee was appointed to consider the regulation of Chancery procedure, and the number of officers and fees, another committee was authorized to investigate the same matters in other courts.¹¹⁵ Towards the end of 1649, the House added more members to the Committee for Regulating the Law,¹¹⁶ and a year later a long debate took place on the subject. Whitelocke recounts that the House had a very long and animated discussion on the Act for translating all the proceedings and books of the law into English, "in which debate some spake in derogation and dishonour of the laws of England." Some members affirmed that the existing laws had been introduced by William the Conqueror, but Whitelocke showed at length that this was a fallacy, and also reminded the House of the seriousness of the contemplated alteration of long-established procedure. Nevertheless, it was unanimously carried that the proceedings of the law should be turned into English,¹¹⁷ and in November, 1650, an Act was passed to this effect.¹¹⁸

In 1651, the Committee for Regulating the Law was ordered to confer with any persons whom they thought fit, and to send for witnesses, papers and other necessary evidence.¹¹⁹ It seems unlikely that satisfactory progress was made, for in December, 1651, another committee, composed of men who were not members of the House, was appointed to consider what inconveniences remained in the law, and how the abuses which proceeded from delay, expense and irregularity might be removed. They were to present their opinions to the Parliamentary committee. This new body included Rushworth and Ashley Cooper, and its chairman was M. Hale.¹²⁰ In March, 1652, Whitelocke made his report from the Parliamentary committee. He reported Acts for the speedy recovery of rents, for the

abolition of customary oaths, and for the taking away of fines on bills, declarations, and original writs, all of which were read twice and committed.¹²¹ According to White-locke's own account, four other measures were submitted. These were proposals, to take away common recoveries, and the unnecessary charge of fines, and to pass entailed lands as if they were fee simple ; to ascertain arbitrary fines upon descent and alienation of copyholds of inheritance ; to regulate pleaders and their fees ; and to ensure the better recovery of debts and damages of £4 and under.¹²² Some attempt at codification was made about this time, for early in 1653 the House resolved that the Bill or Bills containing the whole system of the law, which had been drawn up by the committee for considering inconveniences in the law, should be read on the following day.¹²³ Two days later, the book containing the "system of the law" was read, and it was resolved that 300 copies should be printed for circulation among members only.¹²⁴

During the Parliament of Saints, a determined attempt was made to reform the law in root and branch. With the optimism which accompanies the consciousness of a mission, the Saints declared their intention of drawing up a complete new body of English law. They pointed out that, whereas the laws should be concise and easy to understand, they were now exceedingly intricate and verbose, "those of the profession of the Law differing in very many cases what the law is. . . ." The precedent of former decisions was a bad guide on which to rely, for no one knew the circumstances in which cases had been determined, "whether . . . bribery did not make the judgment, or the powerfulness of some great man, or the love or hatred of the Judge." Again, custom which had lain buried beneath the dust of centuries might be unearthed and used to the undoing of some honest man. A committee was appointed to reduce the "whole-some, just, and good Laws into a Body", arranging them according to some logical plan, and considering how "agreeable to right reason they were ; likewise how proportionable the punishment was to the offence or crime".¹²⁵ This ambitious scheme of codification does not seem to have borne fruit.

It is impossible to give a full account of the Acts which were drafted to amend the worst abuses of the time. The most important measures in the sphere of civil law were those by which the sale of offices and the solicitation or

bribery of judges were punished ; marriage was turned into a civil ceremony, to be performed by the justices in the counties and the municipal authorities in the towns ; all births, marriages, and deaths were to be registered ; duelling was forbidden ; and the means of recovering debts due from corporations was simplified.¹²⁶ With the intention of bringing the benefits of the law within everyone's reach, a Court of Record was to be set up in each county, with power to hear those causes which came within the scope of the justices of the peace or of oyer and terminer, and also to judge all capital and criminal cases arising within the county.¹²⁷ In the sphere of general law reform, the Barebones Parliament succeeded in passing three Acts. Fines on originals writs were abolished,¹²⁸ another Act dealt with the registration of marriages, births, and burials,¹²⁹ and a third set up a High Court of Justice.¹³⁰

The reform of Chancery gave rise to much discussion. All writers agreed that it was the blackest spot in what Fox called the "black puddle" of the law, but for this very reason the business of purifying it led to serious difficulties. "L. D.",¹³¹ in describing the proceedings of the 1653 Parliament, says : "For the Chancery, it was looked on as a great grievance, one of the greatest in the nation, so many horrible things were affirmed of it by members of the house, as those that were, or had a mind to be, advocates for it, had little to say on behalf of it ; and so at the end of one day's debate, the question being put, it was voted down." The Committee for Regulating the Law then brought in a Bill for taking away the court, but since no provision was made for the settlement of causes then depending before it, the measure was voted down and the committee ordered to bring in a Bill "which might do all". But to many members it seemed that to hope for reform in the Chancery was to pray for ice in Hell, and the second Bill which was brought in was criticized as "the washing of the blackamoor, or pruning or lopping evil branches. . . ." Yet another attempt to reform the court met with no warmer welcome, since this time it seemed "a setting up of two courts rather than a casting down one". By this time, says L. D., the legal term had begun, and the people were not eased. Fortunately, some other members of the law committee, who were less insistent on upholding Chancery, came up from the country and prepared a Bill which provided for its abolition, "and providing for the future in a summary way, so as any

ordinary cause might be determined and ended for twenty or forty shillings and in a very short time, and much strife and going to law prevented." But before this measure could be passed the Parliament was dissolved.¹³² Here the Saints' attempts to reform Chancery ended, and it was left to the Parliament elected under the Instrument of Government to pass an ordinance for regulating the Court. The main effect of this measure was to reduce the number of officials, to ensure that they took no other fees than those put down in an annexed table, and to bring about various reforms in the internal procedure of the Court with the object of preventing delay and confusion.¹³³

The reforms which the Barebones Parliament proposed to make in the criminal law embodied some of the pamphleteers' proposals. A man convicted for the first time of stealing a horse or picking a pocket was not to be put to death, but was "to abide at hard labour in chains in the workhouse, by the space of twelve months together, and to be whipped once every month". Those convicted of felonies were to be branded and sent to the House of Correction, "there to continue at hard labour till treble the value of the goods stolen be rendered to the party injured." In every county, there was to be a close connection between the workhouse, the gaol, and the House of Correction. The spiritual condition of the prisoners was not neglected, for the local justices were told to make choice of "some godly and painful preachers, living near every common gaol, who shall . . . instruct and pray with the said prisoners". Two of the most savage punishments of the time, the *peine forte et dure* and the burning of women, were abolished by the terms of two drafted Acts,¹³⁴ but with the end of the 1653 Parliament no further attempt was made to reform the criminal law.

Parliament's most consistent efforts to reform the law were made in connection with the law of debt, which, in addition to the injustice and cruelty that it inflicted on the prisoners, imposed an almost insuperable barrier to the recovery of debts. As early as 1641, there was read for the first time a Bill for the general relief of creditors and of such debtors as could not meet their obligations, but it was rejected.¹³⁵ Eight years later, an Act was passed providing that all debtors who were at that time in prison were to be discharged on taking an oath that they had not £5 worth of real or personal goods, together with not more

than the same value in clothes, bedding, and tools.¹³⁶ An Act of December, 1649, provided that any man imprisoned for debt might apply for a writ of *Habeas Corpus*, which would enable him to take a further oath of poverty before a justice, according to the terms of the former Act. After this oath had been taken, the prisoner could apply for a writ of *Scire Facias*, ordering those who had imprisoned him to appear and show cause why he had not been set at liberty. If he was discharged, all judgments against his land and goods were to be enforced, except in the case of £5 worth of bedding, wearing apparel, and tools.¹³⁷ Later, it was enacted that prisoners who took advantage of this Act might obtain permission from the keeper of the prison to go freely abroad until the time limit of their writ of *Habeas Corpus* had expired.¹³⁸

During the Barebones Parliament a further attempt was made to reform the law of debt. In July, 1653, a committee was appointed to inquire into prisons and prisoners, and in August it made its report. It advised that creditors should be relieved out of their debtors' estates, and, if the latter proved obdurate, their estates should be seized and sold. The Acts which had been passed for the relief of poor prisoners had apparently not been altogether successful. Some prisoners were, "Very poor and live idly upon Charity, in the Prisons; and might discharge themselves by the late Act for Relief of poor Prisoners . . . but choose rather to continue in Prison, though able of Body; Our humble Opinion as to these . . . that they may be set to hard Labour, in a Workhouse; and not partake of the Charity intended for such Prisoners as cannot go at Liberty." On the other hand, there were some prisoners who were very poor, and yet for some reason could not take advantage of the Acts for their relief. It was advisable that "godly and understanding Persons" should be appointed to investigate their case and relieve them. Other duties which might be given to these persons were the inspection of charities for the relief of prisoners and the prevention of extortionate fees.¹³⁹ Probably in accordance with this report, a measure was drafted which aimed at reducing still further the chance of long imprisonment. The creditor was to be enabled to recoup himself out of the debtor's goods, but if these were not sufficiently valuable, the debtor was to be employed in the workhouse adjoining the prison, half the proceeds from his labour going to his creditor. If the judges found that a

prisoner was still hopelessly poor at the end of a year, they were empowered to set him free for the time being. When illness or old age prevented a man from working, he could be imprisoned, on condition that his creditor allowed him 6d. a day.¹⁴⁰

The Act which passed into law in October, 1653, embodied several recommendations of the August report. Judges were appointed to investigate the case of all prisoners committed for civil causes, and to see that provision was made out of the prisoners' estates to satisfy their debts. Fines were to be inflicted for fraud or concealment, and those unable to pay them were to be committed either to the pillory or the workhouse. Obstinate men who stayed in prison through their own inclination were to be removed to the workhouse or House of Correction. The judges were appointed with a view to helping deserving men as well as punishing unrepentant sinners. They could discharge any prisoner who had not been duly prosecuted, and see that he was awarded damages. In addition, they could discharge or curtail the sentence of any prisoner whose case seemed to them to merit special consideration. They were to inquire into the administration of charities, and were to punish cases of fraud. Gaolers' extortions would be prevented by hanging up a table of fees in each prison and punishing those who disregarded it, and it was laid down that beer and wholesome provisions were to be sold at reasonable rates. This ordinance was to continue in force for one year.¹⁴¹

In common with other measures introduced by the Parliament of Saints, the ordinance of 1653 was felt by succeeding Parliaments to introduce dangerous innovations. In April, 1654, it was temporarily suspended, on the grounds that many fears had been expressed as to the "inconveniences and mischiefs" likely to arise unless the powers of the judges were more clearly defined.¹⁴² In June, 1654, an ordinance was passed with the avowed object of removing deficiencies in the Act of 1653. It was stated that the property of others besides debtors would be endangered by the earlier Act, and judges were now appointed to inquire into imprisonment "according to the Explanations and Alterations thereof made by this present Ordinance and not otherwise". Their power was to extend only to the property of which prisoners had been possessed in October, 1653, and provisions were laid down as to the extent to which lands conveyed with power of revocation should be liable, and the case of mortgages was dealt with.¹⁴³

The prisoners themselves seem to have approved of the measures which were passed for their relief, though they deprecated the way in which they were administered by self-seeking lawyers. The Newgate prisoners told Cromwell in 1653 that they had "with the utmost of their abilities pursued the late Act of Parliament . . . yet they are still detained, by reason that justice is overawed by fomenting Lawyers, who seeke after nothing but the restraint of poor Soules".¹⁴⁴ Another petition dwelt on the difficulty of obtaining justice, and attributed it to the "injurious practices of adversaries and lawyers",¹⁴⁵ a further obstacle being the expense of bringing witnesses up to London.¹⁴⁶ But, though the Act of 1653 was admitted by the prisoners to be far from perfect, they were indignant at its suspension, by which many prisoners had been brought "to a perishing Condition, having spent much and can borrow no more". They suggested that, during the period of suspense, the judges formerly appointed, or others, should continue sitting to relieve the poor prisoners.¹⁴⁷

It is clear that agitation for the reform of the law went on fairly continuously during the Commonwealth, and was not, as has sometimes been supposed, a mere passing freak of the Parliament of Saints; but with the Restoration all such projects came to an abrupt end. The failure of the movement is attributed by Holdsworth partly to its being initiated at a time when the government of the country was unstable, and partly to the fact that it was opposed by the very body whose co-operation was most necessary—the lawyers. In any case, he does not consider that its success would have been beneficial, for the development of mediaeval into modern English law was not complete, and premature reform would have strangled its growth.¹⁴⁸ While the layman cannot express an opinion on this point, it is impossible not to be impressed with the vigour and many-sidedness of the movement for law reform and to wish for more information on the conditions which called it forth.

CONCLUSION

It is possible to argue that, after the execution of Charles I, the political and constitutional history of the Interregnum is the record of a curious and interesting experiment, with no roots in the past and no promise for the future.¹ From the point of view of the social and economic historian the case is very different. Under the stress of rebellion and war and revolutionary government, the social tissues underwent changes no less remarkable than those which affected the political framework, but, since they lay deeper and were less subject to experimental manipulation, their history is at once less striking and more continuous and significant.

During the Interregnum, previous tendencies in religion and social philosophy crystallized. The triumph of Puritanism as a way of life and habit of thought, if not as an organization, was fraught with far-reaching consequences for the future economic and social development of England. Under Charles I, free development in the economic as well as in the political and religious sphere had been continually hampered by the use and misuse of a theory of kingly prerogative and divinely appointed authority. To this theory, the transformed Puritanism of the Interregnum, which owed little to Presbyterianism and much to Independency, opposed the doctrine of divinely appointed individualism. Among the middle classes, which continued after the Restoration to be the backbone of Puritanism, this individualism expressed itself, for the most part, not in art or learning or politics, but in trade. The doctrine of a "calling", of continuous and profitable employment in some trade or industry, which had been so widely preached by Puritan divines between 1640 and 1660, was by no means forgotten at the Restoration. Richard Steele published in 1684 *The Tradesman's Calling, being a Discourse concerning the Nature, Necessity, Choice, etc., of a Calling in General*, in which he laid down in no uncertain terms the necessity for an active devotion to business,² while John Bunyan declared that at the Day of Judgment the question asked of men would not be: "Did you believe? but, Were you doers or talkers only?"³ The author of *Robinson Crusoe*—"the prose

epic of self-help"—published in 1726 the *Complete English Tradesman*, consisting of maxims for the guidance of the would-be trader. "Trade," he says, "must not be entered on as a thing of light concern; it is called business very properly, for it is a business for life; . . . nothing but what are to be called the necessary duties of life are to intervene; and even those are to be limited so as not to be prejudicial to business."⁴ The admonitions of the pamphleteers were not without practical effect. Professor Ashley, in his *Economic Organization of England*, made the suggestion that some of the peculiar characteristics of nineteenth century capitalism were due to the fact that the magnates of the Industrial Revolution had, for the most part, been men of a Nonconformist habit of mind.⁵ This suggestion has been confirmed by the investigations of later writers. It has been pointed out by T. S. Ashton that the majority of the outstanding ironmasters of the eighteenth century had Puritan connections,⁶ while A. P. Wadsworth finds that the most prominent clothiers in Lancashire during this period were usually Nonconformists.⁷

The Puritan Revolution was also responsible for a widely different development—the birth of modern democracy. The extreme theories of the Sects undoubtedly influenced the agrarian movement led by Winstanley, and were probably not without effect on the widespread democratic movement in the gilds. These manifestations of industrial and agrarian democracy have sometimes been compared to the paper constitutions of 1650-60, and classed with them as being mere doctrinaire attempts at revolution, remote from reality and possessing no significance except as historical curiosities. It is true that the Digger agitation was led by a mystic and idealist, who aimed at establishing a rather vague sort of communism which was not likely to succeed in seventeenth century England. But it is the function of such men and such movements to stimulate and inspire, rather than to organize practical activities, and, in this sense, it is by no means true to say that Winstanley and the Diggers were without significance for future history. In 1696, John Bellers published his *College of Industry*, a book which seems to bear clear traces of Digger influence.⁸ Over a hundred years later, the beginnings of modern socialism were marked by the publication of the *New View of Society*, in which Owen declares: "that any merit due for the discovery calculated to effect more substantial and permanent benefit to mankind

than any ever yet contemplated by the human mind belongs exclusively to John Bellers.”⁹ In the case of the democratic movement in the craft gilds, there is evidence of a certain continuity of organization after 1660. From the history of the gilds during the Interregnum, it is clear that a line of definite cleavage was beginning to appear between a class of wage-earners on the one hand and a class of employers on the other. About 1650, however, the line was not yet firmly drawn, and there still seemed a possibility that the gild organization might adapt itself to the demands of its poorer members, and that the final divorce between capital and labour might be avoided. The failure of the democratic movement and the Restoration opposition to fresh incorporation were decisive, for the wage-earners were left with the memory and precedent of combined action, but with a determination to apply it to new ends. In 1696, a strike of the journeymen Feltmakers took place,¹⁰ and throughout the eighteenth century there were continual combinations and strikes on the part of the journeymen and reduced small masters, whose predecessors had aimed during the Interregnum at reform rather than revolt.

It was Puritanism which had supplied the motive force that enabled the Parliamentary leaders to oppose Charles I's government, and which still continued, in a changed form, to influence the attitude of the mass of the people towards social problems. But, with the Restoration, the governing classes were influenced more strongly by another aspect of Interregnum thought—the development of rationalism. This development had its intellectual roots in the adoption of the Cartesian philosophy by the Cambridge rationalists, but the reason for its popularity in Restoration England seems to have been partly psychological. The years between 1640 and 1660 had been a time of extraordinary ferment and strain. Traditional organization and loyalties in both church and state had been overthrown, and men had risked their lives and fortunes in the attempt to create a new Heaven and a new earth. To Milton, the England of this period might seem “an eagle muing her mighty youth”, but lesser men, and in particular the more civilized upper classes, wished to push the violent conflict of beliefs as far as possible behind them.¹¹ Posterity, also, disliking the rather indecent and somewhat ludicrous earnestness of Cromwell and Fox, has turned with relief to the better taste and lighter touch of Charles II and Halifax.

The rationalism of the Restoration period was important from a practical as well as from an intellectual point of view. "As an age of reaction," says Russell Smith, "the Age of the Restoration was a practical age,"¹² and its reasonableness was translated into practice in its policy with regard to industry and trade, agriculture and the Poor Law. Here again, it was largely a case of dotting the i's of a policy outlined by the pamphleteers and statesmen of the Interregnum. The Council of Trade, founded in 1660 and composed of representatives from the trading companies, members of the Privy Council and others, was in direct line of descent from the body established in 1650. The promotion of trade was an essential article in the political creed of both Whigs and Tories, but the means which they advocated were different. The Whigs, whose political opposition to France may have had something to do with their economic theories, were in favour of restricting foreign imports to a minimum, while the Tories carried on the free trade movement of the Interregnum and insisted on the advantages of a more open method of commerce. For the foundation of the Bank of England the Whigs were mainly responsible, and here they carried into practice one of the proposals most strongly urged by pamphleteers between 1640 and 1660.

Perhaps the most important legacy of the Interregnum in the realm of industrial development was the virtual abolition of monopolies, and the comparative discredit of incorporation. Although foreign trade was still subject to regulation, industry was comparatively free, and, at a time when France and Germany were still in the grip of an outworn mediaevalism, the unfettered enterprise of English industrialists secured for them the position of leaders in the Industrial Revolution. It seems, too, that there was at least a connection between the relaxation of Government regulation and the widening of that gulf between masters and workmen which became so clearly apparent in the eighteenth century. It would, however, be untrue to suggest that after 1660 the industrial policy of the Government was completely negative. The encouragement of immigration, one of the most marked features of Interregnum statesmanship, was carried on with enthusiasm by Charles II and his advisers. A great stumbling-block to the coming of alien settlers had been the question of religion, but with the growth of toleration this difficulty was not only side-tracked but definitely scouted by those who looked on trade as an end and religion as a

possible means. A letter from Holland, printed in 1688 as a pamphlet, describes the advantages which accrue from a system of toleration. In the first place, says the writer, a large population is necessary if a state is to be prosperous, secondly, men of "tender consciences" are sober and industrious and therefore profitable, and thirdly, toleration is the only way of securing private property from attack.¹³ In view of the trend of opinion, it is not surprising to find that Charles II reaped the benefit of his cousin's religious bigotry by extending active encouragement to the Huguenot refugees who played so important a part in improving English industry.

The Interregnum period marks a definite watershed in agrarian history. Hitherto, the progress of enclosure, though continuous ever since the sixteenth century, had been suspected by conservative statesmen and divines and often checked by the Government. With the Restoration, the encloser carried all before him. The ethics of Joseph Lee supplanted those of Laud, and Fortrey, in his tract on *England's Interest and Improvement*, found adequate justification for enclosure in the fact that it was favoured by landlords because it increased the value of their land.¹⁴ The abortive Act of 1656 was the last attempt made by the central Government to check the movement, and already in the reign of Charles II there began that practice of enclosure by private Bill which was carried to such great lengths during the eighteenth century.¹⁵ The financial interests of the landlords coincided with the teaching of the scientific experts, represented during the Interregnum by Blith and Plattes and Hartlib, and during the eighteenth century by the more famous Tull and Townshend and Bakewell. These men urged, with some truth, that the small farmer had neither the enterprise nor the capital necessary for the adoption of scientific methods. "Where," asked Arthur Young, "is the little farmer to be found who will cover his whole farm with marl . . . who will send across the kingdom to distant provinces for new implements and for men to use them?"¹⁶

It might have been expected that the growth of the Restoration spirit of rational inquiry, together with the establishment of a more settled Government, would have resulted in the practical fulfilment of some of the "liberal" projects of the Interregnum. But the basis and implications of the Interregnum movement had been democratic, and the English rationalists of the later seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were intensely conservative of the existing social

order. Professor Laski has pointed out that there were, for some time after 1660, "faint echoes" of the agitation for law reform,¹⁷ but it was not until comparatively recent times that a large number of the reforms projected between 1640 and 1660 were realized. Similarly, the ideals of Comenius and his followers were not regarded as practical politics by those who might have done something to translate them into reality. The enthusiasm of the educational reformers was not completely ineffectual, for the development of Charity Schools in England, largely as a result of the activities of the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, may be attributed, in part at least, to their influence. The curriculum of these schools, however, was narrow, and as the eighteenth century went on, they became mere "catechetical schools", losing all real significance as an educational force.¹⁸ The lack of interest displayed by Restoration statesmen and publicists in the Interregnum projects of social reform was due partly to the remarkably advanced nature of the reforms themselves,¹⁹ and partly to their unsympathetic attitude towards the poorer classes, who would have reaped the most substantial benefits from them.

The development of policy and thought with regard to the poor is particularly interesting and significant, for it has been truly said that: "there is no touchstone, except the treatment of childhood, which reveals the true character of a social philosophy more clearly than the spirit in which it regards the misfortunes of those of its members who fall by the way."²⁰ For the growing feeling that the poor man's condition was due entirely to his lack of moral stamina and practical application, the harsher side of Puritanism was responsible. Already, during the Interregnum, so enlightened a man as Hartlib had declared that no mercy should be shown to the obstinate, ungodly poor, and after 1660 it was generally assumed that this description applied to all who had failed in the race for employment. Defoe, writing in 1704, voiced the popular sentiment when he stated that in England, "no man can be poor merely for want of work," and that workhouses, corporations and charities for employing the poor were superfluous.²¹ But, though poverty was generally assumed to be an individual crime, it was also discovered to be a public convenience. The Political Arithmeticians of the Restoration may not have despised the sanction which religion gave to their activities, but they were more directly the product of the Age of Reason which had dawned during the Common-

wealth. Their criterion was objective and practical, for they aimed at nothing less than making the poor a source of profit to the state by forcing them to work for reduced wages. Elaborate calculations were worked out as to the increase in national wealth which would result if all the idle poor were made to work and if there were no holidays. Mun declared in 1664 that : " penury and want do make a people wise and industrious," and, in the next century, Arthur Young remarked that : " everyone but an idiot knows that the lower classes must be kept poor or they will never be industrious." ²² Governmental policy revealed the same attitude. The Interregnum Governments had made various attempts to deal constructively with the problems of poverty and unemployment, but the difficulties of the task, and the growth of an increasingly unsympathetic attitude towards the poor, had led them to concentrate upon the suppression of vagrancy. The Act of 1657 was, however, mild in comparison with the Settlement Act of 1662, which declared that hitherto the path of the vagrant had been made too easy, and that in future he could, on the authority of any two justices, be forced to move on within forty days.

The significance of the Interregnum period is too varied to be summed up in a single phrase, but it seems true to say that it marked the decisive turning point in a road which led ultimately to the economic triumphs of the nineteenth century. More directly, the way led down from the stormy heights of controversy to the pleasant levels of the Augustan Age. It is one of the ironies of history that the turbulent Puritans of the Interregnum should have prepared the way for the complacent Laodiceans of the eighteenth century, and it is doubtful if either would have been ready to admit the connection.

NOTES TO CHAPTER I, INFLUENCE OF RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

- (1) E. M. Leonard, *The Early History of English Poor Relief*, Cambridge, 1900, p. 164.
- (2) W. Laud, *Works*, ed. W. Scott, Oxford, 1847, i, 28-9.
- (3) H. Levy, *Economic Liberalism*, 1913, p. 72.
- (4) E. M. Leonard, *op. cit.*, pp. 160-1.
- (5) *Reports of Cases in the Star Chamber and High Commission*, ed. S. R. Gardiner (Camden Society), 1886, pp. 43, 49, and *cf.* p. 82 *seq.*
- (6) See below, Chapter III, Section (1).
- (7) See below, Chapter VI, Section (1).
- (8) See R. R. Reid, *The King's Council in the North*, 1921, p. 408.
- (9) R. R. Reid, *op. cit.*, p. 412 *seq.*
- (10) See below, Chapter IV, Section (1).
- (11) *Reports of Cases in the Star Chamber, etc.*, *ut sup.*, pp. 286-92.
- (12) *Ibid.*, p. 305.
- (13) *Constitutional Documents of the Puritan Revolution*, ed. S. R. Gardiner, Oxford, 1906, p. xxiv.
- (14) J. N. Figgis, *Studies of Political Thought from Gerson to Grotius*, Cambridge, 1923, p. 5.
- (15) The teaching associated with Browne and Barrow laid down that the magistrate was to have no ecclesiastical authority, that all true Christians were kings and priests, and that the ideal religious community was a voluntary association of individuals united in a small, independent body.
- (16) J. N. Figgis in the *Cambridge Modern History*, 1906, iii, p. 742.
- (17) Mrs. L. Hutchinson, *Memoirs of Colonel Hutchinson*, 1906, p. 66.
- (18) R. G. Usher, *The Reconstruction of the English Church*, 1910, i, 249-50.
- (19) F. J. Powicke, *Life of Richard Baxter, 1615-1691*, 1924, p. 102.
- (20) See below, Chapter III, Section (1), Chapter IV, Section (1), and Chapter VI, Section (1), for occasions on which the commercial and propertied classes came into conflict with the monarchy. For a short bibliography on this subject, see R. H. Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, 1926, pp. 323-4.
- (21) On this point, see R. H. Tawney, *op. cit.*, pp. 210-11. Mr. Tawney compares Puritanism to an enchanted mirror in which the middle classes of the seventeenth century looked, and saw an enhancement of their virtues. "There is a magic mirror in which each order and organ of society, as the consciousness of its character and destiny dawns upon it, looks for a moment, before the dust of conflict or the glamour of success obscures its vision. . . . For the middle classes of the early seventeenth century, rising but not yet triumphant, that enchanted mirror was Puritanism. What it showed was a picture grave to sternness, yet not untouched with a sober exaltation—an earnest, zealous, godly generation, scorning delights, punctual in labour, constant in prayer, thrifty and thriving, filled with a decent pride in themselves and their calling, assured that strenuous toil is acceptable to Heaven."
- (22) *Articles of the Commons in Maintenance of the Accusations against Laud*. 1640. Guildhall Library.
- (23) See below, Chapter III, Section (1).
- (24) *The True Character of an Untrue Bishop*. 1641. Guildhall Library.
- (25) Harleian MSS. 4931, f. 80.
- (26) *Ibid.*, f. 87 *seq.*
- (27) S. D'Ewes, *Journals*, ed. W. Notestein, 1923, p. 341.

- (28) H. Scobell, *A Collection of Acts and Ordinances of Parliament*, 1658, i, 21.
- (29) W. E. H. Lecky, *History of Rationalism*, 1865, ii, 107. And cf. J. L. Hammond, *The Rise of Modern Industry*, 1925, pp. 11, 12, 65. He notes the difference in the place occupied by industry in Ancient Greece and in eighteenth century England. "It was as natural," he says, "for the disciples of Sir Isaac Newton to turn to industry as it had been for the disciples of Archimedes to turn away from it."
- (30) F. J. Powicke, *op. cit.*, pp. 167-8.
- (31) The ordinance for setting up Presbyterian Government, ed. C. H. Firth and R. S. Rait, in *Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum*, 1911, i, 1188.
- (32) *Cambridge Modern History*, iv, chap. xii.
- (33) *Ibid.*
- (34) W. A. Shaw, *History of the Church of England during the Civil Wars, and under the Commonwealth*, 1900, ii, 29 seq.
- (35) D. Masson, *Life of Milton*, 1871, ii, 379.
- (36) F. J. Powicke, *op. cit.*, p. 113.
- (37) *Minutes of the Manchester Classis*, ed. W. A. Shaw (Chetham Society, N.S., vol. xx), 1890, ii, 136.
- (38) W. A. Shaw, *The Church of England during the Civil Wars, ut sup.*, ii, 136.
- (39) Firth and Rait, ii, 387 seq.
- (40) F. A. Inderwick, *The Interregnum*, 1891, p. 34.
- (41) E.g. *Three Centuries of Derbyshire Annals*, ed. J. C. Cox, 1890, ii, *passim*.
- (42) *Quarter Sessions from Elizabeth to Anne*, ed. A. H. A. Hamilton, 1878, p. 159.
- (43) *Ibid.*, p. 154.
- (44) E.g. *Cal. of S.P.D.*, 1655-6, p. 103-4.
- (45) *Hist. MSS. Comm., Various Coll., Wiltshire Quarter Session Records*, i, 132.
- (46) *Books of Common Hall*, i, f. 215.
- (47) *At a Meeting before the Justices of Westminster*. 1655. E. 1065 (6).
- (48) *General Sessions of Public Peace for the City of London*. 1654. 669, f. 19 (12).
- (49) J. Thurloe, *A Collection of State Papers*, 1742, iv, 187.
- (50) *Ibid.*, iv, 273.
- (51) *Ibid.*, iv, 523.
- (52) *A Character of England*, 1659, Harl. Misc., 1813, x, 189-98.
- (53) T. Watson, *A Plea for Alms*, 1658, E. 2125 (1).
- (54) *A Sermon Preached at the Funeral of W. Strode*, 1645, E. 302²(16).
- (55) R. Baxter, *A Christian Directory*, 1678, i, 336 b, and *passim*.
- (56) *The Crown of Great Actions*, 1658, E. 934 (4).
- (57) *The Good Man a Public Good*, 1643, E. 34 (1).
- (58) *Sermon Preached to the House of Commons*, 1643, E. 34 (2).
- (59) *A Seasonable Sermon*, 1641, E. 179 (6).
- (60) R. Baxter, *op. cit.*, i, 378 b.
- (61) "A Sermon before the Lords, Commons, and Divines," in *Sermons Preached before the House of Commons*, vol. iii, Guildhall Library.
- (62) "A Sermon Preached at Westminster," in *ibid.*
- (63) M. Wren, *Monarchy Asserted*, 1660, E. 1853 (1).
- (64) *Good Work for a Good Magistrate*, 1651, Guildhall Library.
- (65) *The Vanity and Mischief of Making Earthly Treasures our Chief Treasure*, 1655, E. 844 (11). Significantly enough, this sermon was dedicated to Christopher Packe, one of the outstanding commercial magnates of the time. For his history, see *Dict. Nat. Biog.*, xv, 28-30.
- (66) "The Noble-Man's Pattern," in *Collection of Sermons, ut sup.*, vol. iii.
- (67) See below, Chapter VI, Section (III).
- (68) W. Sheppard, *Office and Duty of Churchwardens*, 1652, E. 1819 (2).

- (69) *The Common Good*, 1652, E. 633 (6).
- (70) S. Hartlib, *The Parliament's Reformation*, 1646, E. 349 (13).
- (71) *Character of a Time Serving Saint*, 1652, 669 f. 16 (53).
- (72) S. Richardson, *The Cause of the Poor Pleaded*, 1653, E. 703 (9).
- (73) B. Gerbier, *A New Year's Result in favour of the Poor*, 1652, E. 681 (14).
- (74) T. Watson, *A Plea, for Alms, ut. sup.* Speaking of uncharitable Christians, he says: "I tell you these devout misers are the reproach of Christianity . . . I may say of penurious votaries, they have the wings of profession by which they seem to fly to heaven, but the feet of beasts, walking on the earth and even licking the dust . . . Oh take heed that, seeing your religion will not destroy your covetousnesse, at last your covetousnesse doth not destroy your religion."
- (75) G. P. Gooch, *Democratic Ideas in the Seventeenth Century*, Cambridge, 1927, p. 230.
- (76) G. Fox, *A Warning to all the Merchants in London*, 1658.
- (77) G. Fox, *The Vials of the Wrath of God*, 1654.
- (78) J. Bellers, *An Abstract of G. Fox's Warning to the Magistrates of London concerning the Poor*, 1724.
- (79) G. Fox, *To the Protector and Parliament of England*, 1658, E. 934 (7). For other illustrations of the Quaker's views on social questions, see: G. Fox, *To the High and Lofty Ones*, 1654, and J. Perrott, *A Visitation of Love and Gentle Greeting of the Turk*, 1658.
- (80) Firth and Rait, i, 954.
- (81) Firth and Rait, i, 420.
- (82) *E.g.* Books of Common Hall, ii, f. 22, and iii, f. 60.
- (83) *Ibid.*, iv, f. 226 b.
- (84) Firth and Rait, i, 1070.
- (85) *Ibid.*, ii, 94.
- (86) Thurloe, *op. cit.*, iv, 607.
- (87) See E. S. Furniss, *The Position of the Laborer in a System of Nationalism*, Cambridge, U.S.A., 1920, p. 44.
- (88) *Good Work for a Good Magistrate*, 1651, Guildhall Library.
- (89) S. R. Gardiner, *History of the Commonwealth and Protectorate*, 1903, iii, 423.
- (90) *A Discourse of the National Excellencies of England*, 1657, E. 1583 (2).
- (91) *A Petition of W. Castell to Parliament*, 1641, E. 181 (26).
- (92) Gardiner, *England under the Commonwealth*, iv, 120.
- (93) Thurloe, *op. cit.*, iii, 59.
- (94) Waller said: "I look upon the episcopacy as an outwork or barrier, and say to myself that if this is stormed by the people and the secret thereby discovered, that we can deny them nothing which they demand, we shall have a task no less difficult to defend our property against them than we had lately to preserve it against the prerogative of the Crown." Quoted by G. P. Gooch, *op. cit.*, p. 175.
- (95) C. Walker, *The Compleat History of Independency*, pt. i, 1661.
- (96) *Right and Might Well Met*, 1648, E. 536 (28).
- (97) *A Short History of the Anabaptists*, 1642, E. 148 (5).
- (98) T. Edwards, *Gangraena*, 1646, pt. i, E. 323 (2).
- (99) *A Short History of the Anabaptists, ut sup.*
- (100) It is probable that Walwyn held more advanced opinions on social democracy than the rest of the Levellers. He was accused by Edwards in his *Gangraena* of declaring that: "it was an unconscionable thing that one should have £10,000, and another, more useful and deserving to the Commonwealth, not be worth twopence," and of aiming at a state of society in which all things should be held in common. See Gooch, *op. cit.*, p. 179. He did not confine himself to general expressions of opinion, for in 1652 he appeared as the eloquent representative of the free traders against the Levant Company. See below, Chapter IV, Section (1).

(101) *The Representative of Divers Well-Affected Persons in and about the City of London*, 1649, E. 541 (16).

(102) T. Edwards, *Gangraena*, ut. sup., and pt. iii, E. 368 (5).

(103) *Manifesto from Lilburne, Walwyn, Prince, and Overton*, 1649, E. 550 (25).

(104) *A Worke of the Beaste*, 1641, E. 181 (7).

(105) For the Quakers' views on social questions, which in their turn show some affinity to those of the Diggers, see pp. 19, 28. It is possible that further investigation might bring to light a more direct connection between the two bodies.

(106) J. Winstanley, *The New Law of Righteousness*, 1654, Jesus College Library, Oxford.

(107) See especially J. Winstanley, *The Law of Freedom in a Platform*, 1652, E. 655 (8).

(108) *A New Year's Gift to Parliament and the Army*, 1650, E. 587 (6).

(109) *The Saint's Paradise*, 1658, E. 2137 (1).

(110) See below, Chapter V, Section (1).

(111) *An Iron Rod for the Nailors and Tradesmen near Birmingham*, 1655, 669 f. 19 (75).

(112) G. Fox, *The Line of Righteousness and Justice Stretched Forth over all Merchants*, 1674.

(113) G. Fox, *Journal* (Friends' Tract Association), 1901, i, 39, 40. And cf. G. Fox, *A Warning to all the Merchants in London*, 1658.

(114) G. Fox, *Journal*, i, 27.

(115) See below, Conclusion.

(116) J. Tulloch, *Rational Theology and Christian Philosophy in England in the Seventeenth Century*, 1872, ii, 14.

(117) *Ibid.*, p. 99.

(118) J. Milton, *Areopagitica*, 1644.

(119) *A Light Shining in Buckinghamshire*, 1648, E. 475 (11).

(120) T. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. A. R. Waller, Cambridge, 1904, p. 45.

(121) *Ibid.*, p. 59.

(122) *Ibid.*, p. 95.

(123) *Ibid.*, p. 251.

(124) *Ibid.*, p. 69 seq.

(125) *Ibid.*, p. 263.

(126) M. Needham, *The Case of the Commonwealth Stated*, 1650, E. 600 (7).

(127) Mercurius Politicus, 1651, Burney Coll. 40 a, *passim*.

(128) *The True Cavalier Examined by his Principles*, 1656, Middle Temple Tracts, II.

(129) J. Suckling, "An Account of Religion by Reason," Addit. MSS. 35333, f. 11 seq.

(130) J. Lee, *Vindication of a Regulated Enclosure*, 1656, Goldsmiths Library.

(131) Stowe MSS. 152, f. 67. Propositions for a Fishing Trade.

NOTES TO CHAPTER II, ECONOMIC CONDITIONS, 1640-60

- (1) W. R. Scott, *Joint Stock Companies*, Cambridge, 1912, i, 199.
- (2) *Ibid.*, i, 216-17.
- (3) *Ibid.*, i, 224.
- (4) C. H. Firth, *Cromwell's Army*, 1902, p. 213.
- (5) *Cal. of S.P.D., 1644*, pp. 504, 505, 513 : and *ibid.*, 1644-5, pp. 44-5, 60.
- See also C. H. Firth, *Cromwell's Army*, chap. ix, *passim*.
- (6) By this system, the householder provided food and lodging at a fixed rate. He was given a ticket for the amount due to him, but the prospect of repayment was doubtful.
- (7) N. Wallington, *Historical Notices of the Reign of Charles I*, 1869, ii, 116.
- (8) J. Webb, *Memorials of the Civil War in Herefordshire*, 1879, i, 195, 319 ; and ii, 12.
- (9) G. N. Godwin, *The Civil War in Hampshire*, 1904, pp. 218, 277.
- (10) A. Kingston, *Hertfordshire during the Civil War*, 1894, p. 79. For complaints of the burden of free quarter, see also *Hist. MSS. Comm., Rept. V, MSS. of R. Cholmondeley*, p. 349.
- (11) A. Kingston, *East Anglia and the Great Civil War*, 1897, pp. 217, 270.
- (12) P. Morant, *History of Essex*, 1768, i, 73.
- (13) *L.J.*, viii, 70.
- (14) F. Maseres, *Select Tracts Relating to the Civil Wars in England*, 1815, p. 219.
- (15) *Trevelyan Papers* (Camden Society, O.S., vol. 84), 1872, part iii, p. 194.
- (16) "The charge this year," he says, "hath been so great to this country, by impositions and taxes laid upon it, and by the wast that is made by the souldiers that are billeted here, that men are at a stand what course to take, or how to dispose of themselves. The fear they apprehend by that which hath befallen their neighbours, in Northumberland and Bishoprick of Durham, from the Scots army . . . hath made many both here and in the Bishoprick, to forsake their houses . . . so that it is greatly to be feared we shall find both the value of our lands and rents to fall and abate very much." *Diary of Sir Henry Slingsby*, ed. D. Parsons, 1836, pp. 60-1. See also a letter from the Scots Commissioners. *L.J.*, viii, 545.
- (17) See W. R. Scott, *Joint Stock Companies*, i, 232-4.
- (18) The impositions of the Interregnum Governments fall into the familiar division of direct and indirect taxation. In the department of direct taxation, what the Long Parliament did was to make the hitherto occasional and "extraordinary" direct taxation a regular means of supply. On this point, see W. Kennedy, *English Taxation*, 1913, p. 24. For the chief ordinances which fixed the various assessments, see Firth and Rait, i, 85, 630 ; ii, 24, 54, 484, 681. The total sum fixed by Parliament varied from £35,000 to £120,000. It was divided up between the counties and towns on a calculation made by reference to the highest return ever made by them for a subsidy. Local commissioners fixed the detailed assessment, and were responsible for the collection of the money. See S. Dowell, *A History of Taxation and Taxes in England*, 1888, ii, 4. In the department of indirect taxation, the most important means of supply was the excise. This tax was, as Kennedy says, "a new departure of the most striking kind . . . It was only extreme financial pressure which induced Parliament to adopt and develop this means of providing for increasing expenditure." W. Kennedy, *op. cit.*, pp. 51-2. The excise duties were levied chiefly on beer, but also on necessities

of life, like salt, soap, starch, butchers' meat ; and on industrial commodities like iron, lead, and copper. For the chief ordinances which established and extended the excise, see Firth and Rait, i, 202, 274, 364, 466, 806, 916 ; ii, 227, 368, 845, 1186.

(19) In August, 1643, an ordinance was issued directing every inhabitant of London rated on the subsidy books to advance as a compulsory loan a sum equal to fifty times the amount of his subsidy. S. R. Gardiner, *History of the Great Civil War*, 1893, i, 202. See also, on the point of Government borrowing, W. S. Prideaux, *Memorials of the Goldsmiths' Company*, 1896, i, 213 ; ii, 15.

(20) *Excize Anatomized*, 1659, E. 999 (1).

(21) *Reasons Showing the Enhancing of Excize will be a Disadvantage to the State*, 1650, 669 f. 15 (9).

(22) *Trade's Destruction is England's Ruin, or Excize Decried*, 1659, E. 984 (6).

(23) Firth and Rait, i, 916.

(24) Mercurius Democritus, 9-16th Feb., 1653. Burney Coll. 44 a.

(25) A. Kingston, *East Anglia and the Civil War*, 1897, p. 293 seq.

(26) *Hist. MSS. Comm., Rept. IV, Earl of Denbigh's MSS.*, p. 272.

(27) *Cal. of S.P.D., 1651-2*, pp. 480-1.

(28) *Hist. MSS. Comm., Rept. V, MSS. of House of Lords*, p. 119. See also *L.J.*, ix, 402, for a protest from the Brewers.

(29) *Hist. MSS. Comm., Rept. VI, Appx., MSS. of House of Lords*, p. 195.

(30) *Proclamation by the King*, 1643, 669, f. 7 (52).

(31) *Hist. MSS. Comm. Rept. IV, MSS. of House of Lords*, p. 267.

(32) *Ibid., Rept. V*, p. 76.

(33) *Cal. of S.P.D., 1645-7*, p. 258.

(34) J. Webb, *op. cit.*, i, 242.

(35) J. Webb, *op. cit.*, ii, 46.

(36) *L.J.*, iv, 286.

(37) *Hist. MSS. Comm., Rept. IV, MSS. of House of Lords*, p. 62.

(38) *C.J.*, ii, 143.

(39) Firth and Rait, i, 347.

(40) *L. J.*, vii, 94.

(41) *Hist. MSS. Comm. Rept. V, MSS. of House of Lords*, p. 109.

(42) *Cal. of S.P.D., 1641-3*, p. 437.

(43) *C.J.*, ii, 912.

(44) *L.J.*, x, 427.

(45) *Hist. MSS. Comm.*, 1899, *Leyborne-Popham MSS.*, p. 52.

(46) On this point, see M. Oppenheim, *A History of the Administration of the Royal Navy and of Merchant Shipping*, 1896, i, 271-2.

(47) *Cal. of S.P.D., 1648-9*, p. 324.

(48) *Cal. of S.P.D., 1649-50*, p. 106.

(49) *Ibid.*, p. 121.

(50) *Ibid.*, p. 143.

(51) *Ibid.*, p. 202.

(52) *Ibid.*, p. 306. On this point see also pp. 18, 23, 50, 160, 308, 317, 361, 366, 425, 483.

(53) W. R. Scott, *op. cit.*, i, 230 seq.

(54) G. N. Godwin, *op. cit.*, p. 96.

(55) J. Rushworth, *Historical Collection*, see W. Scott, *op. cit.*, i, 230.

(56) *L.J.*, iv, 202.

(57) *A Caution to Keep Money*, 1642, E. 146 (21).

(58) *Parl. Hist. of Eng.*, see W. R. Scott, *op. cit.*, i, 235.

(59) *L.J.*, iv, 576.

(60) Firth and Rait, i, 262, 391, 1218 ; ii, 495.

(61) *L.J.*, ix, 550-1.

(62) *The Merchant's Remonstrance*, 1644, E. 32 (16).

(63) *Declaration of Lord Fairfax and His Council*, 1648, 669, f. 13 (57).

- (64) *Cal. of S.P.D.*, 1650, p. 178 *seq.*
- (65) The decay of industry and trade is illustrated by the decline in the number of apprentices taken by the trading Companies. In Sheffield, those admitted to the Cutlers' Company dropped from 50 or 60 to 3 in 1642. At Oxford, the number fell from 60 or 90 to 48 in 1644, and 44 in 1645. See O. J. Dunlop and R. D. Denman, *English Apprenticeship and Child Labour*, 1912, pp. 102-3.
- (66) "The Present Surveigh of London and England's State, 1643," J. Somers, *Tracts*, ed. 1809-15, iv, 535.
- (67) The Petition of the Marriners and Seamen, 1641, J. Somers, *Tracts*, iv, 353.
- (68) *The Petition of Poor Labouring Men*, 1641, 669, f. 4 (55).
- (69) *The Petition of the Master, etc., of the Silk Throsters*, 1641, 669 f. 4 (60).
- (70) *The Petition of Many Thousand Poor People*, 1641, 669 f. 4 (54).
- (71) *The Petition of Many Hundreds of Distressed Women*, 1641, 669 f. 4 (57).
- (72) *L.J.*, iv, 539 *seq.*
- (73) *L.J.*, iv, 541 *seq.*
- (74) *C.J.*, ii, 404.
- (75) *L.J.*, iv, 559.
- (76) *C.J.*, ii, 430.
- (77) *L.J.*, iv, 575.
- (78) *L.J.*, v, 511.
- (79) *L.J.*, v, 545.
- (80) *E.g. L.J.*, v, 501-7.
- (81) *L.J.*, v, 512.
- (82) *E.g. L.J.*, vi, 271.
- (83) England's Petition to the King, 1643, Somers, *Tracts*, 1811, v, 33.
- (84) England's Tears for the Present Wars, 1644, *ibid.*, v, 37.
- (85) *The Mournful Cries of Many Thousand Poor Tradesmen*, 1647, 669, f. 11 (116).
- (86) See T. Rogers, *History of Agriculture and Prices*, Oxford, 1887, v, 826.
- (87) F. Blomefield, *History of Norwich*, 1806, iii, 399.
- (88) J. Webb, *op. cit.*, pp. 123-4.
- (89) J. Latimer, *Annals of Bristol in the Seventeenth Century*, Bristol, 1900, pp. 158-9.
- (90) *Ibid.*, p. 166.
- (91) *Ibid.*, p. 181.
- (92) N. Wallington, *op. cit.*, ii, 183.
- (93) J. Latimer, *op. cit.*, p. 193.
- (94) *Ibid.*, pp. 195-6.
- (95) J. Sprigg, *Anglia Rediviva*, Oxford, 1854, p. 129.
- (96) J. Latimer, *op. cit.*, p. 219.
- (97) *Ibid.*, p. 221.
- (98) A Petition of the Inhabitants of Cyrencester, 1642, ed. J. Washbourn, in *Bibliotheca Gloucestrensis*, 1825, p. 190.
- (99) An Historical Relation of the Military Government of Gloucester, 1645, *Bibl. Glouc.*, p. 70.
- (100) *Hist. MSS. Comm., Rept. XII, Appx., Pt. IX, Records of the Gloucester Corporation*, p. 508.
- (101) *Ibid.*, pp. 505, 507.
- (102) For the state of the clothing trade, 1640-50, see Section (II) of this chapter.
- (103) *Hist. MSS. Comm., Rept. VI, MSS. of House of Lords*, p. 140.
- (104) *Collection of Original Letters and Papers*, ed. T. Carte, 1739, p. 103.
- (105) R. W. Cotton, *Barnstaple during the Great Civil War*, 1889, p. 189.
- (106) *Victoria County History, Dorset*, ii, 253.
- (107) *Cal. of S.P.D.*, 1649-50, p. 329.
- (108) *Ibid.*, 1641-3, p. 299.
- (109) *Hist. MSS. Comm., Rept. XIII, Appx., Pt. IV, Rye MSS.*, p. 214.

- (110) *Ibid.*, p. 215.
- (111) *Ibid.*, p. 215.
- (112) *Hist. MSS. Comm., Rept. XI, Appx. Pt. IV, Townshend MSS.*, p. 24.
- (113) *Records of the Borough of Leicester, 1603-88*, ed. H. Stocks, Cambridge, 1923, p. 314.
- (114) *Leicester Records, ut. sup.*, p. 349.
- (115) The state of agriculture and the clothing trade in the north is dealt with below.
- (116) *L.J.*, ix, 371.
- (117) J. Touzeau, *The Rise and Progress of Liverpool*, Liverpool, 1910, i, 228.
- (118) *Cal. of S.P.D., 1648-9*, p. 219.
- (119) See J. Touzeau, *op. cit.*, i, 223.
- (120) *Victoria County History, Lancashire*, ii, 298-9.
- (121) E. Broxap, *The Great Civil War in Lancashire*, Manchester, 1910, p. 174.
- (122) *The Life of Adam Martindale*, ed. R. Parkinson. *Chetham Society*, vol. iv, 1845, p. 31.
- (123) Quoted by E. Baines, *History of County Palatine and Duchy of Lancaster*, 1836, ii, 404-5.
- (124) E. Broxap, *op. cit.*, p. 155.
- (125) *Life of Adam Martindale, ut sup.*, p. 55.
- (126) *Hist. MSS. Comm. Rept. VIII, MSS. of Corporation of Pontefract*, p. 274.
- (127) *Newcastle Council Minute Book, 1639-56*, Newcastle Records Committee Publications, Newcastle, 1920, p. 7.
- (128) *Ibid.*, p. 36.
- (129) *Ibid.*, p. 82.
- (130) *Ibid.*, p. 87.
- (131) *V.C.H., Lancashire*, ii, 299.
- (132) *A Discourse of the Wars in Lancashire*, ed. W. Beaumont, *Chetham Soc.*, vol. lxii, 1864, p. 52.
- (133) *Cal. of S.P.D., 1652-3*, p. 39.
- (134) M. C. Law, *The Story of Bradford*, 1913, p. 107.
- (135) N. Wallington, *op. cit.*, ii, 256. In 1653 the Earl of Northampton petitioned Parliament to stop the proceedings made against him for the seizure of cloth by his soldiers during the war. *Cal. of S.P.D., 1653-4*, p. 62. It appears from an entry in the *Lords' Journals* that the clothiers' case was dismissed. *L.J.*, ix, 318.
- (136) *Cal. of S.P.D., 1644*, p. 300.
- (137) *C.J.*, iii, 510.
- (138) *Letter from Amsterdam to J. Beauchampe, Merchant of London, 1642*, 190 f. 13 (48).
- (139) *The Clothiers' Petition to the King, 1641*, 669 f. 3 (48).
- (140) *Petition of the Inhabitants of Berkshire, 1641*, 669 f. 4 (75).
- (141) *L.J.*, iv, 237.
- (142) *Hist. MSS. Comm., Rept. IV, MSS. of House of Lords*, p. 114.
- (143) *L.J.*, iv, 536-7.
- (144) *C.J.*, ii, 528.
- (145) *Mr. Grimston's Speech in Parliament, 1642*, E. 200 (14).
- (146) *Proclamation by the King, 1643*, 669 f. 5 (114).
- (147) *C.J.*, ii, 430.
- (148) *Cal. of S.P.D., 1644*, p. 157.
- (149) H. Heaton, *The Yorkshire Woollen and Worsted Industries*, Oxford, 1920, p. 208 seq.
- (150) *Ibid.*
- (151) *Hist. MSS. Comm., Rept. VI, MSS. of House of Lords*, p. 188.
- (152) *Ibid., Rept. VI*, p. 193. For an instance of houses being burnt down in other parts of the country, see *C.J.*, iv, 503, where the inhabitants of Dennington, Berkshire, claim to have lost goods, etc., to the value of £5,283.

- (153) H. Heaton, *op. cit.*, p. 212 *seq.*
 (154) J. S. Fletcher, *The Story of Leeds*, 1919, p. 45.
 (155) *Petition of the Clothiers of Leeds to the King*, 1642, E. 144 (6).
 (156) *Petition of the Gentry, Ministers and Freemen of York to the King*, 1642, 669 f. 6 (229).
 (157) *C.J.*, iv, 442.
 (158) *Cal. of S.P.D.*, 1650, p. 178.
 (159) Thurloe, *op. cit.*, v, 127.
 (160) J. Bischoff, *History of Woollen and Worsted Manufacturers*, 1842, i, 69.
 (161) Diary of the Priestley Family, in "Yorkshire Diaries and Autobiographies," *Surtees Society*, 1888, vol. lxxvii, 23.
 (162) *Hist. MSS. Comm., Rept. V, MSS. of Rev. Field*, p. 387.
 (163) *Ibid.*, p. 391.
 (164) *Hist. MSS. Comm., Rept. XV, Appx. VII. MSS. of the Duke of Somerset*, p. 64.
 (165) *Hist. MSS. Comm.*, vol. i, *MSS. of Marquis of Bath*, p. 40.
 (166) *Ibid.*, *Rept. XII, MSS. of County of Somerset*, p. 694.
 (167) *Ibid.*, *Rept. VII, MSS. of House of Lords*, p. 1.
 (168) *Ibid.*, *Var. Coll.*, vol. ii, *MSS. of Mrs. Wentworth*, p. 374.
 (169) *L.J.*, vii, 271.
 (170) *Hist. MSS. Comm., Rept. XI, Appx. Pt. VII, MSS. of Reading*, p. 217.
 (171) *Diary of the Corporation*, ed. J. M. Guilding, *Reading Records*, Oxford, 1896, iv, 186, 191, 215.
 (172) *Hist. MSS. Comm., Rept. V, MSS. of Rev. E. Field*, p. 388.
 (173) *Memorials of the Civil War*, ed. R. Bell, 1849, i, 79.
 (174) *Hist. MSS. Comm., Rept. XIII, Appx. Pt. I, Portland MSS.*, p. 180.
 (175) *Cal. of S.P.D.*, 1644, p. 346.
 (176) *Ibid.*, pp. 346 and 366.
 (177) *Cal. of S.P.D.*, 1644-5, pp. 288-9.
 (178) "Records of the Committees for Compounding, etc.," *Surtees Soc.*, vol. cxi, 1905, p. 15 and *passim*.
 (179) *Victoria County History, Durham*, ii, 236.
 (180) *Hist. MSS. Comm., Rept. IV, House of Lords MSS.*, p. 57.
 (181) *Ibid.*, p. 160.
 (182) *Ibid.*, p. 140.
 (183) *Hist. MSS. Comm., Rept. III, Earl of Northumberland's MSS.*, p. 86.
 (184) *Cal. of S.P.D.*, 1644-5, p. 136.
 (185) *Hist. MSS. Comm., Rept. XIII, Appx. Pt. I Portland MSS.*, p. 84.
 (186) *Cal. of S.P.D.*, 1641-3, p. 470.
 (187) *Hist. MSS. Comm., Rept. XIII Appx. Pt. I Portland MSS.*, p. 303.
 (188) *Petition of the Husbandmen of the East Riding. Mercurius Politicus*, 11-18th Dec., 1651. Burney Coll., 40 a.
 (189) *Memorials of the Civil War, ut. sup.*, i, 98.
 (190) *Ibid.*, i, 190-1.
 (191) *Ibid.*, i, 209 *seq.*
 (192) "Yorkshire Royalist Composition Papers," ed. J. W. Clay, *Yorkshire Arch. Soc. Record Series, Vol. XV*, 1893, i, 50.
 (193) *Ibid.*, p. 71.
 (194) *Ibid.*, pp. 176-7.
 (195) *Ibid.*, p. 179.
 (196) See *Dict. Nat. Biog.*, xvii, 14 *seq.*
 (197) H. Robinson, *Briefe Considerations Touching the Advancement of Trade and Navigation*, 1649, E. 589 (6).
 (198) W. R. Scott, *op. cit.*, i, 244 *seq.*
 (199) *L.J.*, iv, 541.
 (200) *Declaration of the Parliament of England*, 1649, E. 548 (12).
 (201) D. Macpherson, *Annals of Commerce*, 1805, ii, 445-6.
 (202) See Chapter IV, Section (II).

- (203) P.R.O., S.P.D., ix, 137 *seq.* Observations by Mr. Robinson on Exchanges.
- (204) S. Lamb, *Seasonable Observations to the Protector*, Somers, *Tracts*, vi, 460.
- (205) S. Chappel, *A Diamond or Rich Jewel*, 1650, Goldsmiths' Library.
- (206) *The Seas Magazine Opened*, 1653, E. 710 (20).
- (207) Propositions for a Fishing Trade, Stowe MSS. 152, f. 67. For other pamphlets on the fishing trade see *London's Blame*, 1651, E. 624 (4); and S. Smith, *A True Narration of the Royal Fishings*, 1641, E. 170 (7).
- (208) G. Gardyner, *Description of the New World*, 1651, E. 1298 (2). See also *Virginia Impartially Examined*, 1649, E. 551 (24); and *Virgo Triumphans*, 1650, E. 589 (11).
- (209) *Cal. of S.P.D.*, 1650, pp. 106-7, 137, 149, 252.
- (210) *Ibid.*, p. 121.
- (211) *Cal. of S.P.D.*, 1652-3, p. 230.
- (212) *Ibid.*, p. 249.
- (213) *C.J.*, vi, 489.
- (214) *C.J.*, vi, 521.
- (215) *Cal. of S.P.D.*, 1651, p. 130.
- (216) *Hist. MSS. Comm.*, *Leyborne-Popham MSS.*, p. 82.
- (217) *Cal. of S.P.D.*, 1652-3, p. 85.
- (218) W. R. Scott, *op. cit.*, i, 240.
- (219) *Ibid.*, i, 252.
- (220) R. Coke, *A Detection of the Court and State of England*, 1697, pp. 350, 366.
- (221) *Cal. of S.P.D.*, 1651-2, p. 448.
- (222) "Extracts from Records of the Newcastle Merchant Adventurers," *Surtees Soc.*, 1895, i, 170.
- (223) *Cal. of S.P.D.*, 1658-9, pp. 7-8.
- (224) *Newcastle Council Minute Book*, *ut. sup.*, p. 160.
- (225) *Hist. MSS. Comm.*, *Rept. VI*, *Miss Harrington's MSS.*, p. 437.
- (226) T. Burton, *Diary*, ed. J. T. Rutt, 1828, i, lxxxv.
- (227) W. R. Scott, *op. cit.*, i, pp. 258-9.
- (228) *Harleian MSS.* 4549, f. 9.
- (229) *The Clarke Papers*, ed. C. H. Firth (Camden Society, N.S.), 1882, iii, 82.
- (230) T. Burton, *op. cit.*, ii, 23.
- (231) *Hist. MSS. Comm.*, *Rept. V*, *Duke of Sutherland's MSS.*, p. 161.
- (232) R. Coke, *op. cit.*, pp. 387-8.
- (233) Thurloe, *op. cit.*, iv, 137. And see also *ibid.*, iv, 44, for complaints of the seizure of persons and goods as a result of the war.
- (234) *Hist. MSS. Comm.*, *Rept. VI*, *Miss Harrington's MSS.*, p. 439.
- (235) *Cal. of S.P.D.*, 1655-6, p. 12.
- (236) Thurloe, *op. cit.*, v, 369.
- (237) *Cal. of S.P.D.*, 1655-6, p. 177.
- (238) *Ibid.*, p. 229.
- (239) *A Collection of Original Letters, etc.*, *ut. sup.*, ii, 80.
- (240) *Cal. of S.P.D.*, 1655-6, p. 265.
- (241) *Cal. of S.P.D.*, 1655-6, p. 358.
- (242) *Ibid.*, p. 363.
- (243) *Ibid.*, pp. 210-11.
- (244) *Ibid.*, p. 200.
- (245) *Cal. of S.P.D.*, 1651-2, p. 481.
- (246) *The World's Mistake in Oliver Cromwell*, 1648, Harl. Misc. i, p. 237 *seq.*
- (247) *Cal. of S.P.D.*, 1657-8, p. 261.
- (248) Thurloe, *op. cit.*, vii, 429-30.
- (249) Thurloe, *op. cit.*, vii, 582. See also on this subject, *ibid.*, vii, 432, 469.
- (250) *Hist. MSS. Comm.*, *Rept. V*, *Duke of Sutherland's MSS.*, p. 169.
- (251) J. Latimer, *op. cit.*, p. 277.
- (252) *Ibid.*, p. 282.

- (253) *Petition of the Real Lenders upon the Public Faith*, 1657, 669, f. 20 (54).
- (254) *Thurloe, op. cit.*, vii, 616.
- (255) *Ibid.*, vii, 662.
- (256) *Cal. of S.P.D.*, 1659-60, p. 38.
- (257) *Ibid.*, p. 81.
- (258) *Ibid.*, p. 269.
- (259) *Hist. MSS. Comm. Rep. XIII, Appx., Pt. IX, Records of Gloucester Corporation*, p. 517.
- (260) *Hist. MSS. Comm., Rept. XIII, Records of Rye Corporation*, p. 230.
- (261) *J. Latimer, op. cit.*, p. 285.
- (262) *Remonstrance : Apprentices in and about London*, 1659, 669, f. 22 (10).
- (263) *A Word of Reasonable and Sound Council*, 1659, 669, f. 22 (9).
- (264) *Final Protest and Sense of the City*, 1659, 669, f. 22 (26).
- (265) *Cal. of S.P.D.*, 1659-60, p. 101.
- (266) *A Letter Agreed to by the Citizens, etc., of Suffolk*, 1659, 190, g. 13 (123).
- (267) *A Letter from the Gentry of the County of Lincoln*, 1659, 190, g. 13 (125).
- (268) *A Letter from the Gentry of Norfolk and Norwich*, 1660, 190, g. 13 (148).
- (269) *A Declaration of the Gentry of Devon*, 1659, 190, g. 13 (300).
- (270) *The Declaration of the Nobility, Gentry, Ministry and Commonalty of Kent*, c. 1659, 190, g. 13 (306).
- (271) *Declaration of the Knights, etc., of Warwickshire*, 1660, 190, g. 13 (316).
- (272) *Address to Parliament from the Freeholders, etc., of the Late Associated Western Counties*, 1659, 190, g. 13 (407).
- (273) *The Plain Case of the Commonwealth*, 1658, E. 972 (5).
- (274) *Awake, O England, or the People's Invitation to King Charles ; Being a Recital of the Ruins Over-running the People and their Trades ; with an opportune Advice to return to Obedience of their Kings under whom they ever Flourished*, 1660, Harl. Misc. i, 277.

NOTES TO CHAPTER III, THE LAND PROBLEM

(1) According to Gregory King's estimate, there was at the time of the Revolution a population of $5\frac{1}{2}$ millions in England and Wales. Out of these, over $4\frac{1}{2}$ millions were maintained by agriculture. See W. Ashley, *Economic Organization of England*, 1925, p. 119.

(2) E. M. Leonard, "Inclosure of Common Fields in the Seventeenth Century," in *Trans. R. Hist. Soc., N.S.*, xix, 128.

(3) R. H. Tawney, *The Agrarian Problem in the Sixteenth Century*, 1912, p. 391.

(4) Ed. S. R. Gardiner, *Constitutional Documents*, pp. 205 seq.

(5) Mr. Pierpont's speech on the Impeachment of Sir R. Berkeley, 6th July, 1641, Burney Coll. 9 a.

(6) Speech of J. Pym, Burney Coll., 10 a.

(7) Speech of Sir J. Culpepper, 9th Nov., 1640, Burney Coll., 10 a.

(8) Clarendon, *History of the Great Rebellion*, Oxford, 1847, p. 131.

(9) *L.J.*, vi, 468.

(10) *The Western Husbandman's Lamentation*, 1646, 669, f. 10 (19).

(11) *Victoria County History, Surrey*, 1912, iv, 432. The effect of the wars on agriculture is dealt with in some detail in Chapter II, Section (III).

(12) *Cambridge Modern History*, iv, 457.

(13) Firth and Rait, i, 106-7.

(14) *Ibid.*, i, 256, 258.

(15) For an account of the Committee, see preface to the *Calendar of the Proceedings of the Committee for Compounding*, ed. M. A. E. Green, 1889.

(16) *Cal. of Comm. for Comp.*, p. 160.

(17) Firth and Rait, ii, 520-45.

(18) *Ibid.*, ii, 591-8.

(19) *Ibid.*, ii, 623-52.

(20) *Ibid.*, i, 879.

(21) *Ibid.*, ii, 81-104.

(22) *Ibid.*, ii, 168-91.

(23) *Cal. of Comm. for Comp.*, p. 422.

(24) Firth and Rait, ii, 329.

(25) *Ibid.*, i, 1181.

(26) *Cal. of Comm. for Comp.*, p. 171.

(27) *Ibid.*, p. 237. See also report of Sussex Commissioners, p. 475.

(28) *Ibid.*, p. 254.

(29) *Ibid.*, p. 146.

(30) *Ibid.*, p. 240.

(31) *Ibid.*, pp. 425, 430.

(32) *Ibid.*, p. 616.

(33) *Ibid.*, p. 635.

(34) *Ibid.*, p. 2021.

(35) *Ibid.*, p. 2085.

(36) *Ibid.*, p. 1304.

(37) *Ibid.*, p. 1497.

(38) *Ibid.*, p. 1511.

(39) *Ibid.*, p. 262.

(40) *C.J.*, vii, 275.

(41) *Cal. of Comm. for Comp.*, p. 266.

(42) *Index of Names of Royalists whose Estates were confiscated during the Commonwealth*, compiled by M. G. W. Peacock, 1879.

(43) A. H. Johnson, *The Disappearance of the Small Landowner*, Oxford, 1909, p. 80.

(44) *C.J.*, iv, 330.

(45) *C.J.*, iv, 585.

(46) *Ibid.*, iv, 278.

(47) *Ibid.*, iv, 687.

(48) *Ibid.*, v, 8.

(49) *Ibid.*, v, 162.

(50) *Cal. of Comm. for Comp.*, p. 23.

(51) *C.J.*, v, 4.

(52) *Cal. of Comm. for Comp.*, p. 1497.

(53) C. Walker, *op. cit.*, ii, 207-8.

(54) See article on Wildman in *Dict. Nat. Biog.*, xxi, 233.

(55) *Cal. of Comm. for Comp.*, pp. 1118-3298 *passim*.

(56) *Ibid.*, pp. 553-3212 *passim*.

(57) *Ibid.*, pp. 696-3212 *passim*.

(58) *Ibid.*, p. 2589.

(59) *Ibid.*, pp. 1429-3143 *passim*.

(60) *Cal. of Comm. for Comp.*, pp. 1117-3146 *passim*. In the contracts for purchase of Crown lands, there is evidence of the same sort of speculation. T. French bought four manors, two pastures, four messuages and several other pieces of property not specifically described, his purchases ranging over eight counties and extending from Lancashire to Kent and from Lincolnshire to Herefordshire. J. Sanderson bought four manors, the Honour of Bullingbroke in Lincolnshire, two messuages and nine miscellaneous pieces of land and rents, mostly in Yorkshire, Wiltshire and Lincolnshire. M. Richardson bought six manors in Yorkshire and Lincolnshire. At the top of the list comes J. Warr, with fourteen manors, ten messuages, five pieces of pasture and woodland, and one park, his purchases being mainly in the south-west of England and Wales. See *Contracts for Purchase of Crown Lands P.R.O. Records of Exchequer, Augmentation Office, Misc. Books, vols. clxxiii-iv*.

Fee-farm rents were also bought up on a large scale. Ellis bought ninety-six at St. Albans and seven elsewhere in Hertfordshire, Young 152 in Yorkshire, Sweeting 128 in Northumberland, and Blomeley 174 in London. Martin had 176 in Oxfordshire, and Sefton had 95 in Suffolk. See *Calendar of Deeds of Sale of Fee-Farm Rents, P.R.O. Records of Exchequer, Augmentation Office*.

(61) T. Rymer, *Foedera*, 1744, ix, iii, 246.

(62) J. Winstanley, *The Law of Freedom, ut sup.*

(63) *Cal. of Comm. for Comp.*, p. 1649.

(64) *Ibid.*, p. 1786.

(65) *Ibid.*, p. 2856.

(66) *Ibid.*, p. 1495.

(67) *Ibid.*, p. 2734.

(68) *Ibid.*, p. 1893.

(69) *C.J.*, v, 33.

(70) *Cal. of S.P.D.*, 1649-50, pp. 488-9.

(71) *Petition of Tenants of T. Dyke. S.P.D.*, lxxiv, 78 *seq.*

(72) Firth and Rait, ii, 520.

(73) *S.P.D.*, xlii, 227. For an extract from this document, see App. A (1).

(74) *Cal. of S.P.D.*, 1653-4, p. 28.

(75) *The Sad and Lamentable Case of the Tenants of the Late Dean and Chapter of Durham*, 1654, 669, f. 19 (52).

(76) T. Rogers, *op. cit.*, v, 826.

(77) Harl. MSS. 2130, f. 21 *seq.*

(78) *Ibid.*, 2130, f. 87 *seq.*

(79) T. Rogers, *op. cit.*, v, 809.

(80) *L.J.*, iv, 209.

(81) *Ibid.*, iv, 219.

(82) *Ibid.*, iv, 227.

- (83) *L.J.*, iv, 257.
- (84) *Ibid.*, iv, 274.
- (85) *L.J.*, iv, 252.
- (86) *Ibid.*, iv, 262.
- (87) *C.J.*, iii, 94.
- (88) *W. Riding Quarter Session Records*, ed. J. Lister, 1915, ii, 248.
- (89) *Ibid.*, ii, 272.
- (90) *Ibid.*, iv, 264.
- (91) *Ibid.*, iv, 269.
- (92) *Ibid.*, iv, 264.
- (93) *Ibid.*, iv, 312.
- (94) *L.J.*, iv, 326.
- (95) *Ibid.*, iv, 483 ; v, 42.
- (96) *Ibid.*, vi, 21.
- (97) *Ibid.*, vi, 107.
- (98) *Ibid.*, vi, 391.
- (99) *Ibid.*, viii, 201.
- (100) *C.J.*, ii, 471.
- (101) Firth and Rait, i, 139. This ordinance seems to have had little immediate effect, for, a short time after it was passed, the Lords declared that the disturbances in Somerset, Dorset, and Wiltshire still continued, and ordered Captain Ludlow to apprehend 28 of the most notorious offenders. (*L.J.*, vi, 118).
- (102) *A New Engagement or Manifesto*, 1648, 669, f. 12 (97). Cf. E. 684 (33).
- (103) Petition to Parliament. Addit. MSS. 37345, f. 207 b.
- (104) *The Lawyer's Bane*, 1647, E. 401 (36).
- (105) *Chaos*, 1659, E. 989 (27).
- (106) *The Waste Land's Improvement*, 1653, E. 715 (18).
- (107) G. Plattes, *Practical Husbandry Improved*, 1656, Goldsmith's Library.
- (108) W. Blith, *The English Improver*, 1649, E. 474 (10).
- (109) *The Copyholders' Plea*, 1653, E. 724 (4).
- (110) R. H. Tawney, *The Agrarian Problem*, p. 301.
- (111) *Cal. of S.P.D.*, 1640, p. 27.
- (112) *Ibid.*, pp. 85-6.
- (113) *Hist. MSS. Comm., Report IV, MSS. of House of Lords*, p. 46.
- (114) *Hist. MSS. Comm., Report V, MSS. of House of Lords*, p. 64.
- (115) *Hist. MSS. Comm., Report VI, MSS. of House of Lords*, p. 132.
- (116) *C.J.*, v, 423.
- (117) Petition presented to the Committee for Regulating the Law. Perfect Diurnall, 5th March, 1652. Burney Coll., 41 a.
- (118) J. Winstanley, *Law of Freedom*, *ut sup.*
- (119) J. Lee, *Vindication of a Regulated Enclosure*, *ut sup.*
- (120) *A Modest Plea for an Equal Commonwealth*, 1659, E. 999 (1).
- (121) *The only Right Rule for Regulating Laws and Liberties*, *ut sup.*
- (122) *The Representative of Divers Well-affected Persons*, 1649, E. 541 (16).
- (123) *An Apology for a Younger Brother*, 1641, E. 170 (3).
- (124) *Younger Brother's Advocate*, 1655, E. 234 (5).
- (125) J. Harrington, *Oceana*, ed. S. B. Liljegren, Heidelberg, 1924, *passim*.
- (126) *A Bloody Independent Plot Discovered*, 1647, E. 419 (2).
- (127) *The Clarke Papers*, ed. C. H. Firth (Camden Society), 1894, ii, 21.
- (128) B. Whitelocke, *Memorials*, Oxford, 1853, iii, 18.
- (129) *A New Year's Gift to Parliament and the Army*, 1650, E. 587 (6).
- (130) *The Declaration of the Well-affected in the County of Bucks*, 1649, E 555 (1).
- (131) *The Declaration of the Inhabitants of Wellinborrow*, 1650, 669, f. 15 (21).
- (132) *Cal. of S.P.D.*, 1650, p. 106.
- (133) *Ibid.*, p. 218.
- (134) *Cal. of S.P.D.*, 1653-4, pp. 251, 268.

- (135) S.P.D., lxxiv, 78 seq.
- (136) "To my Lord Generall and his Councell of War," *The Clarke Papers*, *ut sup.*, ii, 217 seq.
- (137) *A New Year's Gift to Parliament and the Army*, *ut sup.*
- (138) *The True Levellers' Standard Advanced*, 1649, E. 552 (5).
- (139) *A Light Shining in Buckinghamshire*, 1648, E. 475 (11).
- (140) *The True Levellers' Standard Advanced*, *ut sup.*
- (141) *St. Edward's Ghost*, 1647, Harl. Misc., viii, 94.
- (142) J. Winstanley, *A Letter to Lord Fairfax and the Council of War*, Harl. Misc., viii, 586.
- (143) "To my Lord Generall, etc.," *The Clarke Papers*, *ut sup.*, ii, 218.
- (144) J. Winstanley, *A Letter to Lord Fairfax, etc.*, *ut sup.*
- (145) *A New Year's Gift*, *ut sup.*
- (146) R. Coster, *A Mile cast into the Common Treasury*, 1649, E. 585 (4).
- (147) J. Winstanley, *The New Law of Righteousness*, *ut sup.*
- (148) J. Winstanley, *A Letter to Lord Fairfax*, *ut sup.*, p. 591.
- (149) *A Declaration of Parliament*, 1648, E. 548 (12).
- (150) E.g. J. Cooke, *Unum Necessarium*, 1648, E. 425 (1).
- (151) *A Petition from Well-affected Persons*, 1648, E. 464 (5). Cf. "Agreement of the People," 1647, ed. S. R. Gardiner, *Constitutional Documents*, p. 333.
- (152) *The Cries of many Poor Tradesmen*, 1648, E. 427 (6).
- (153) J. Moore, *A Scripture Word against Enclosure*, 1656. (In the Advertisement.)
- (154) J. Moore, *The Crying Sin of England is Not Caring for the Poor*, E. 713 (7).
- (155) J. Moore, *The Crying Sin*, *ut sup.*, and cf. J. Moore, *A Scripture Word*, *ut sup.*
- (156) J. Moore, *A Scripture Word*, *ut sup.*,
- (157) J. Moore, *The Crying Sin*, *ut sup.*
- (158) H. Halhead, *Enclosure Thrown Open*, 1650, E. 619 (2).
- (159) Pseudonismus, *A Vindication of Considerations concerning Common Fields and Enclosures*, 1656.
- (160) S. Hartlib, *The Reformed Husbandman*, 1651, Goldsmiths' Library.
- (161) Pseudonismus, *Considerations concerning Common Fields and Enclosures*, 1653, E. 719 (9).
- (162) *The Common Good*, 1652, E. 633 (6).
- (163) *Considerations concerning Common Fields*, *ut sup.*
- (164) A. Moore, *Bread for the Poor*, 1653.
- (165) Pseudonismus, *Considerations concerning Common Fields*, *ut sup.*
- (166) *A Vindication of Considerations*, *ut sup.*
- (167) *The Common Good*, *ut sup.*
- (168) Pseudonismus, *A Vindiction*, *ut sup.*
- (169) J. Lee, *Vindication of a Regulated Enclosure*, *ut sup.*
- (170) Pseudonismus, *A Vindication*, *ut sup.*
- (171) J. Lee, *Vindication of a Regulated Enclosure*, *ut sup.*
- (172) *Ibid.*
- (173) A. Moore, *Bread for the Poor*, *ut sup.* (To the Reader.)
- (174) *The Common Good*, *ut sup.*
- (175) W. Dugdale, *History of Imbanking and Draining*, 1662.
- (176) S. Hartlib, *Legacy of Husbandry*, 1650, Goldsmiths' Library.
- (177) *Rural Economy in Yorkshire in 1641* (Surtees Soc., 1857), xxxiii, 129 seq.
- (178) *Victoria County History, Lincolnshire*, ii, 334.
- (179) *The Common Good*, *ut sup.*
- (180) *Chaos*, *ut sup.*
- (181) *The Waste Land's Improvement*, *ut sup.*
- (182) H. Halhead, *Enclosure Thrown Open*, *ut sup.*
- (183) G. Plattes, *Practicall Husbandry Improved*, *ut sup.*
- (184) *Ibid.*

- (185) W. Blith, *The English Improver Improved*, 1652, E. 666 (4).
- (186) W. Blith, *The English Improver*, 1649, E. 474 (10).
- (187) E. g. R. Weston, *Discourse of Husbandry in Brabant and Flanders*, 1650, E. 618 (12).
- (188) *Brief Discourse of Divers Excellent Wayes and Means for the Manuring of Land*, 1646, Goldsmiths' Library.
- (189) S. Hartlib, *An Essay for Advancement of Husbandry Learning*, 1651, Goldsmiths' Library.
- (190) W. Blith, *The English Improver Improved*, *ut sup.*
- (191) S. Hartlib, *An Essay for the Advancement of Husbandry Learning*, *ut sup.*
- (192) S. Hartlib, *The Inrichment of the Weald of Kent*, 1650, Goldsmiths' Library.
- (193) S. Hartlib, *The Reformed Husbandman*, 1651.
- (194) W. Blith, *The English Improver*, *ut sup.*
- (195) *Ibid.*
- (196) R. Weston, *Discourse of Husbandry*, *ut sup.*
- (197) W. Blith, *The English Improver*, *ut sup.*
- (198) *A Design for Plenty*, 1652, E. 686 (5).
- (199) G. Plattes, *Practicall Husbandry Improved*, *ut sup.*
- (200) C. Dymock, *Discoverie for the Division and Setting out of Land*, c. 1650, Goldsmiths' Library.
- (201) W. Blith, *The English Improver*, *ut sup.*
- (202) *An Exact Relation of the Proceedings and Transactions of the Late Parliament*, 1653, by L. D., Somers, *Tracts*, 1811, vi, p. 279.
- (203) Speech of Master Smith of the Middle Temple, 28th Oct., 1641, Burney Coll. 9 a.
- (204) W. Ball, *Rule of a Free Born People*, 1646, E. 341 (1).
- (205) "Agreement of the People," 1647, ed. S. R. Gardiner, *Constitutional Documents*, p. 333.
- (206) *Reasons for the Establishment of Public Sale*, 1654, 669, f. 19 (36).
- (207) *The Clarke Papers*, *ut sup.*, i, 299 *seq.*
- (208) 1653. Ed. S. R. Gardiner, *Constitutional Documents*, p. 405.
- (209) *C.J.*, ii, 435.
- (210) *Ibid.*, ii, 677.
- (211) *Ibid.*, vii, 358.
- (212) T. Burton, *op. cit.*, 175-6.
- (213) *C.J.*, vii, 470.
- (214) Firth and Rait, ii, 783 *seq.*
- (215) *Ibid.*, ii, 1116 *seq.*
- (216) See *Quarter Session Records of the County of Northampton*, ed. J. Wake (The Northamptonshire Record Society), 1924, vol. i *passim*.
- (217) *Hertford County Records*, ed. W. J. Hardy, Hertford, 1905, i, 83, 106.
- (218) *Three Centuries of Derbyshire Annals*, *ut sup.*, ii, 174.
- (219) *E.g. North Riding Quarter Session Records*, ed. J. Atkinson, 1884 *seq.*, iv, 216.
- (220) *Hist. MSS. Comm., Various Coll.*, iv, *Records of Orford*, p. 268.
- (221) *Hist. MSS. Comm., Records of the City of Exeter*, p. 214.
- (222) *Leicester Records*, *ut sup.*, p. 354.
- (223) *Ibid.*, *ut sup.*, p. 414. The reference is, of course, to J. Moore, the author of various anti-enclosure pamphlets which have been cited in Section (III) of this chapter.
- (224) *Leicester Records*, *ut sup.*, pp. 428-9.
- (225) "Cromwell's Major Generals," *Eng. Hist. Review*, vol. x, 1895.
- (226) "I have, according to the Major Generall's direccion, sent you here inclosed a List of the names of divers Townes and Lordshippes in this County. All or the greatest part whereof were formerly greate Townes and places of husbandry and tillage . . . And now inclosed and depopulated Soe that in most of them there is not any tillage not one Teame kept, and in the best of them not above one or two att ye most. I could send you ye names of

divers other Townes and Lordshipps Inclosed and Depopulated, which being added to these within named would amount to above the Third part of the County just halfe besides many others now goeing in." *Leicester Records*, *ut sup.*, p. 428.

(227) Thurloe, *op. cit.*, iv, 686. For Whalley's letter, see Appendix A (ii).

(228) Somers, *Tracts*, *ut sup.*, vi, 183, and cf. *C.J.*, vii, 121.

(229) "This Bill being brought in with a Clause that ascertains the Fine to be one Year's Value, Exception was taken against the same, as being contrary to the Orders of the House that any Bill should be brought in to charge any of the People in their inheritance . . ." *C.J.*, vii, 433.

(230) *Isleworth-Syons Peace*, 1657, Guildhall Library.

(231) Firth and Rait, ii, 130.

(232) W. Dugdale, *op. cit.*, p. 145.

(233) *Cal. of S.P.D.*, 1640-1, p. 308.

(234) "Adventurers" was the term applied to those who undertook the work of drainage.

(235) Harl. MSS. 7006, f. 227 *seq.*

(236) Harl. MSS. 7006, f. 237.

(237) W. Dugdale, *op. cit.*, p. 147.

(238) *A Brief Remembrance*, 1653, 669, f. 17 (31).

(239) *Declaration of Daniel Noddell*, 1653, Goldsmiths' Library.

(240) *Cal. of S.P.D.*, 1652-3, pp. 373-4.

(241) *Cal. of S.P.D.*, 1654-4, p. 57.

(242) *Order by the Lord General and Council of State*, 1653, 669, f. 17 (27).

(243) Addit. MSS. 25, 302. f. 180.

(244) See Chapter I, Section (III), above.

(235) W. H. R. Curtler, *The Enclosure and Redistribution of Our Land*, Oxford, 1920, p. 186.

(246) E. C. K. Gonner, "The Progress of Inclosure during the Seventeenth Century," *Eng. Hist. Review*, xxiii, 483. And see also E. C. K. Gonner, *Common Land and Inclosure*, 1912, pp. 162-3.

(247) R. North, *Lives of the Norths*, ed. A. Jessopp, 1890, i, 31.

(248) R. Baxter, "The Poor Husbandman's Advocate to Rich Racking Landlords, 1691," *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, vol. x, No. 1, Jan., 1926, p. 179 *seq.*

NOTES TO CHAPTER IV, INDUSTRIAL POLICIES AND DEVELOPMENTS

(1) It has seemed natural and convenient to include commercial monopolies in this section, but no attempt has been made to describe commercial development as a whole.

(2) For the way in which the prerogative became associated with monopolistic and unpopular methods of managing trade, see below, the remarks of Lilburne and Walwyn, pp. 145-7, 155-7.

(3) G. Unwin, *The Gilds and Companies of London*, 1908, p. 293.

(4) *Ibid.*, p. 307.

(5) H. Levy, *Monopoly and Competition*, 1911, p. 58.

(6) Those who attacked the Westminster Soap Company declared that "the substance and conclusion of this Relation is That many Citizens of London were put out of an old Trade, in which they had been bred all their time, and which was their only livelihood, by Knights, Esquires and Gentlemen, never bred up to the Trade, upon pretence of a Project and new invention." *A True Relation of the Business Concerning Soap*, 1641, E. 156 (6).

(7) *Ibid.*

(8) Speech of Sir J. Culpepper, 1640, Burney Coll. 10 a.

(9) W. Hyde Price, *The English Patents of Monopoly*, Boston, U.S.A., 1906, p. 45.

(10) Cf. G. Unwin, *Gilds and Companies*, p. 327. "The evidence of the leaders of both political parties and of the monopolists themselves all goes to prove that for every pound that reached the Exchequer at least three or four pounds were paid by the consumer. The playing-card makers required a protective duty of 40s. a dozen to be laid on foreign cards, in order that they might pay the king 36s. on every gross made. The corporation of Brickmakers were to give the king 6d. a thousand, and charge the consumer an extra 1s. 6d. The retailing vintners, having bargained to give the king £2 a tun, were said to have raised the price £4, £8, and £12 a tun. But this did not represent all the waste by any means. In the case of many monopolies the king got nothing, and the patentee perhaps little or nothing, whilst the price was raised, the quality of the wares deteriorated, and the progress of the industry retarded by the restriction."

(11) *Bishops, Judges and Monopolies*, 1641, E. 171 (2)

(12) *A Pack of Patentees*, 1641, E. 163 (5).

(13) *The Frogs of Egypt*, 1641, E. 166 (2).

(14) *Hog's Character of a Projector*, 1642, E. 155 (8).

(15) *The Projector's Downfall*, 1642, E. 140 (22). And cf. *Good News for all True Hearted Subjects*, 1641, 669, f. 4 (22).

(16) *Hist. MSS. Comm., Rept. IV, MSS. of House of Lords*, p. 29.

(17) *Ibid.*, p. 29.

(18) *Ibid.*, p. 36.

(19) *Ibid.*, p. 55.

(20) *Ibid.*, p. 90.

(21) *Ibid.*, p. 29.

(22) *Cal. of S.P.D.*, 1640, p. 39.

(23) Speech of D. Holles, 1641, Burney Coll. 10a.

(24) Further Impeachment of Strafford, 1640, Burney Coll. 10a.

(25) He says: "These like the frogs of Egypt have gotten possession of our dwellings and have scarce a room free from them. They sup in our cup,

they dip in our dish, they sit by our fire, we find them in the dye-vat, wash-house and pandering tub, they share with the butler in his box, they have marked and scalded us from head to foot . . . And, Mr. Speaker, some of these are ashamed of their right name ; they have a vizard to hide the brand made by that good law of the last Parliament of King James. They make bye-laws which serve their turn to squeeze us and fill their purses ; unface these and they will prove as bad Cards as any in the pack ; these are not petty Chapmen, but wholesale men." Speech of Sir J. Culpepper, 1640, Burney Coll. 10a.

- (26) *C.J.*, ii, 24.
- (27) *Cal. of S.P.D.* 1640-1, p. 263.
- (28) *Cal. of S.P.D.*, 1640-1, p. 271.
- (29) *C.J.*, ii, 33.
- (30) *Ibid.*, ii, 34.
- (31) *Ibid.*, ii, 32.
- (32) *Ibid.*, ii, 55.
- (33) *Ibid.*, ii, 77.
- (34) *Ibid.*, ii, 204.
- (35) H. Levy, *op. cit.*, p. 84 *seq.*
- (36) *A True Relation of the Business Concerning Soap*, *ut sup.*
- (37) *Cal. of S.P.D.*, 1639-40, p. 600.
- (38) *C.J.*, ii, 55.
- (39) *Ibid.*, ii, 260.
- (40) *Ibid.*, ii, 519, 527.
- (41) *Ibid.*, v, 382.
- (42) *Ibid.*, ii, 515.
- (43) *Ibid.*, iii, 536.
- (44) R. Wilkins, *The Soap Patentees of London's Petition Opened and Explained*, 1646, E. 349 (20).
- (45) *A Looking Glass for Soap Patentees*, 1646, E. 316 (26).
- (46) *Reports of Cases Adjudged in the Court of Exchequer*, coll. by T. Hardres, 1693, p. 53.
- (47) *C.J.*, vii, 575.
- (48) The wine merchants and vintners agreed to pay 40s. a tun to the King for all the wines they imported, and in return the King prohibited the Coopers from importing wines. The licences for retailing wines were also under the management of the Vintners' Company for the King's benefit. See W. Herbert, *History of the Livery Companies*, 1836, ii, 631.
- (49) *The Frogs of Egypt*, *ut sup.*
- (50) *The Humble Remonstrance of the Farmers and Adventurers of the Wine Farm*, 1641, 669, f. 4 (19).
- (51) *A Dialogue between Abell and Kilvert*, 1641, E. 156 (16). See also *An Exact Legendary*, 1641, 669 f. 4 (22).
- (52) *The Last Discourse between Abell and Kilvert*, E. 156 (18).
- (53) *C.J.*, ii, 87.
- (54) *Ibid.*, ii, 55.
- (55) *Ibid.*, ii, 157.
- (56) *C.J.*, ii, 156-7
- (57) *Cal. of S.P.D.*, 1640-1, p. 65.
- (58) *C.J.*, ii, 523.
- (59) *Ibid.*, ii, 529.
- (60) *Ibid.*, ii, 596.
- (61) *C.J.*, v, 501.
- (62) W. Hyde Price, *op. cit.*, p. 116.
- (63) H. Levy, *op. cit.*, p. 26.
- (64) R. Gardiner, *England's Grievance Discovered in Relation to the Coal Trade*, 1655.
- (65) *Ibid.*
- (66) *Cal. of S.P.D.*, 1655-6, p. 280.
- (67) H. Levy, *op. cit.*, p. 28.
- (68) *Ibid.*, p. 7 *seq.*

- (69) *A Brief Remonstrance Concerning the Pre-emption of Tin*, 1654, E. 783 (13).
 (70) *Ibid.*
 (71) *Cal. of S.P.D.*, 1653-4, p. 322. And cf. *Cal. of S.P.D.*, 1658-9, p. 118.
 (72) *L.J.*, viii, 418.
 (73) Harl. MSS., 6833, f. 58 seq.
 (74) *C.J.*, v, 239.
 (75) Harl. MSS. 6833, f. 66 b.
 (76) *Cal. of S.P.D.*, 1655-6, pp. 191, 202, and cf. p. 329.
 (77) T. Webster, *Patent Cases*, 1844, i, 85.
 (78) W. R. Scott, *op. cit.*, i, 119-21.
 (79) *Ibid.*, i, 141.
 (80) *Ibid.*, i, 179.
 (81) J. Lilburne, *England's Birthright Justified*, 1645, E. 304 (17).
 (82) J. Lilburne, *A Postscript Written in the Tower of London*, 1646, E. 359 (17).
 (83) T. Johnson, *A Plea for Free Men's Liberties*, 1646, E. 319 (1).
 (84) *The Golden Fleece Defended*, E. 381 (5).
 (85) L. Roberts, *The Treasure of Traffic*, 1641, E. 205 (10).
 (86) *A Discourse Consisting of Motives for the Enlargement and Freedom of Trade*, 1645, E. 260 (21).
 (87) G. Gardynier, *A Description of the New World*, 1651, E. 1298 (2).
 (88) H. Robinson, *Briefe Considerations*, *ut sup.*
 (89) *The Humble Petition of the Officers and Soldiers of Portsmouth*, 1648, 669, f. 18 (71).
 (90) "It followeth that the Company tendeth to make some few men extreame rich, to breed prodigall servants . . . striving who shall exceed in fustians, diet, housing, and household stuffe, in so much as a common citizen is (in these times) more like a Nobleman or Gentleman, and the ancient moderation of the City quite lost, whereas were trade free there would be in lieu of these few rich men a multitude of plaine able traders." *The Golden Fleece Defended*, *ut sup.*
 (91) J. Lilburne, *A Postscript*, *ut sup.*
 (92) J. Lilburne, *England's Birthright*, *ut sup.*
 (93) J. Lilburne, *A Postscript*, *ut sup.*
 (94) *A Discourse Consisting of Motives for the Enlargement and Freedom of Trade*, *ut sup.*
 (95) *L.J.*, iv, 237.
 (96) *C.J.*, ii, 210
 (97) *C.J.*, ii, 158.
 (98) *Ibid.*, ii, 160.
 (99) *Ibid.*, ii, 172.
 (100) *Ibid.*, ii, 178.
 (101) *C.J.*, ii, 179.
 (102) *Ibid.*, ii, 380.
 (103) *Ibid.*, ii, 578.
 (104) Mercurius Aulicus, 10th May, 1643, Burney Coll. 16a.
 (105) *C.J.*, iii, 235.
 (106) Mercurius Aulicus, 17th Sept., 1643, Burney Coll., 17a.
 (107) *C.J.*, iii, 265.
 (108) Firth and Rait, i, 310.
 (109) *C.J.*, iii, 486.
 (110) *Ibid.*, iii, 518.
 (111) *L.J.*, ix, 83.
 (112) Firth and Rait, ii, 403.
 (113) *S.P.D.*, cxxvii, 55 seq.
 (114) For instances of complaints, see Clothworkers Court Book, vol. 1639-49, f. 143b, and vol. 1639-65, ff. 23 and 35.
 (115) T. Burton, *op. cit.*, i, 117.
 (116) *Ibid.*, i, 221.

- (117) *Ibid.*, i, 308 seq.
 (118) *Ibid.*, i, 345. Neither the State Papers nor the Commons Journals contain any reference to these events.
 (119) *C.J.*, v, 293.
 (120) *C.J.*, vi, 353. See also J. Bruce, *Annals of the East India Company*, 1810, vol. i *passim*.
 (121) *Strange News from the Indies*, 1652, Goldsmith's Library.
 (122) J. Bruce, *op. cit.*, i, 492 seq.
 (123) *Ibid.*, i, 516 seq.
 (124) Scott, *op. cit.*, i, 248.
 (125) *Cal. of S.P.D.*, 1651-2, p. 177.
 (126) *Cal. of S.P.D.*, 1653-4, p. 421. And cf. *Cal. of S.P.D.*, 1654, pp. 16, 136.
 (127) *S.P.D.*, lxxv, 60 seq.
 (128) *Cal. of S.P.D.*, 1657-8, p. 141.
 (129) *Proclamation by the Protector*, 1657, 669, f. 20 (78).
 (130) See above, Chapter I, Section (IV).
 (131) *S.P. Foreign*, 105, vol. 144, 68-74. I am indebted to Mr. G. Ambrose for this reference.
 (132) *S.P.D.*, xxiv, 58-62.
 (133) *Cal. of S.P.D.*, 1651-2, p. 271.
 In this, as in other cases of anti-Company agitation, it is impossible to pronounce judgment without more detailed information as to the economic effects of the Company's method of government. In the State Papers, there are many references at this time to the disorganization of the Levant Company's government and the corruption of its officials. A typical entry occurs in June, 1649, when the Company wrote to Sir Thomas Bendish complaining of the unscrupulous dealings of the Treasurer who had replaced Sir Sackville Crow, and adding that they had not heard altogether satisfactory reports of Sir Thomas himself. *Cal. of S.P.D.*, 1649-50, p. 193. Nevertheless, in 1650, when they were questioned by the Committee for Trade, the Company claimed to export 20,000 dyed and dressed cloths yearly, and to import raw silks, cottons, and other goods. *Cal. of S.P.D.* 1650, pp. 71-2. Mr. G. Ambrose who has been investigating the history of the Company, has found no evidence of appreciable decay in their trade during the Interregnum.
 (134) See Chapter I, especially Sections (II) and (III).
 (135) *Sir T. Roe's Speech in Parliament*, 1640, Harl. Misc. iv, 433.
 (136) A Brief Discourse concerning the Trade, Bullion, and Money of England, Addit. MSS. 10402, f. 10.
 (137) J. Bland, *Trade Revived*, 1659. Goldsmiths' Library.
 (138) S. Lamb, *Seasonable Observations*, *ut sup.*, p. 458. "And seeing a court of merchants is so necessary," he says, "what a glorious and honourable profession it would be if your Highness's Court were all merchants and also your domestic servants, everyone adventuring so much stock as he could spare into other parts of the world."
 (139) *Cal. of S.P.D.*, 1650, p. 180.
 (140) On this point, see H. Heaton, *The Yorkshire Woollen and Worsted Industries*, 1920, chaps. iv, vii.
 (141) *C.J.*, ii, 491.
 (142) *L.J.*, iv, 678.
 (143) *Ibid.*, ix, 543.
 (144) *The Humble Petition of Many Thousands of Clothiers*, 1647, 669, f. 11 (2).
 (145) *The Golden Fleece*, 1656. See W. Cunningham, *The Growth of English Industry and Commerce in Modern Times*, Cambridge, 1921, i, 311.
 (146) *Moderate Intelligencer*, 12-19th Nov., 1646, Burney Coll. 23a.
 (147) *C.J.*, ii, 528.
 (148) *Ibid.*, vii, 119.
 (149) *Cal. of S.P.D.*, 1650, p. 21.
 (150) J. Thurloe, *op. cit.*, v, 127.

- (151) *Cal. of S.P.D.*, 1649-50, p. 64.
- (152) *Cal. of S.P.D.*, 1651-2, p. 88.
- (153) *Ibid.*, p. 479.
- (154) *Ibid.*, p. 480.
- (155) H. Heaton, *op. cit.*, pp. 228-9.
- (156) *Cal. of S.P.D.*, 1640, p. 501.
- (157) H. Heaton, *op. cit.*, p. 229.
- (158) *West Riding Quarter Session Records, ut sup.*, p. 240.
- (159) H. Heaton, *op. cit.*, pp. 229-30.
- (160) *C.J.*, vii, 467.
- (161) T. Burton, *op. cit.*, i, 126-7
- (162) *C.J.*, vii, 588.
- (163) *Cal. of S.P.D.*, 1566-7, p. 181. See also H. Heaton, *op. cit.*, p. 230.
- (164) *C.J.*, ii, 95, 122.
- (165) *Ibid.*, vii, 459.
- (166) Firth and Rait, ii, 451 *seq.*
- (167) *Ibid.*, ii, 775.
- (168) *Ibid.*, ii, 1137.

In 1651, a project was laid before the Government which claimed to be a panacea for all the evils which afflicted the clothing trade. The author of this project admits that the industry of Holland has of late years increased rapidly, "to the destruction of the vent of all fine cloths of English making, both in Holland, France, and the east-lands; and hath drawn from us considerable numbers of weavers, dyers, and cloth-workers, now settled in Leyden and other towns of Holland." The key to the situation is the fact that the Hollander is occupied chiefly with the manufacture of fine wools, which are usually imported from Spain. Therefore, England must engross into her own hands the entire output of Spanish wool. This can be done by concluding a bargain with the Spanish King to allow us the pre-emption of all wools for a certain number of years. The trade thus secured is to be managed by a joint stock company, whose activities are not to be confined to London, but diffused throughout the whole country, special care being taken that the western districts are not adversely treated. England will obtain a monopoly of the clothing trade in Europe, for not only Holland, but France, will suffer a fatal blow by being deprived of Spanish wool. J. Thurloe, *op. cit.*, i, 201. Despite the alluring simplicity of this proposal, there is no evidence that it was seriously considered by the Government.

- (169) *The Humble Petition of Many Thousands of Clothiers, ut sup.*
- (170) *Cal. of S.P.D.*, 1651-2, p. 480.
- (171) *Cal. of S.P.D.*, 1651, p. 270.
- (172) *C.J.*, iii, 811.
- (173) *Ibid.*, iii, 411.
- (174) Firth and Rait, i, 1059.
- (175) Speech of Sir J. Culpepper, Nov., 1640, Burney Coll. 10a.
- (176) *Cal. of S.P.D.*, 1652-3, p. 136. By an ordinance of Sept. 1643, an excise of 6d. in the £ had been imposed upon the new and old draperies. Firth and Rait, i, 277.
- (177) Firth and Rait, ii, 889.
- (178) *A Letter from York*, 1659, 190, g. 13 (248), and cf. 190, g. 10 (317).
- (179) W. Cunningham, *Growth of English Industry*, i, 298.
- (180) *The Humble Petition of Many Thousands of Clothiers, ut sup.*
- (181) *Cal. of S.P.D.*, 1651-3, p. 511.
- (182) *S.P.D.*, Charles I, dxv, 355 *seq.*
- (183) *Ibid.*, xxv, 92, 93.
- (184) *Ibid.*, xv, 196.
- (185) "Wee can affirme that, as in the generall, Kingdomes and commonwealths have a necessarie dependance one upon another in matters of Trade and commerce, and as one member in the Bodie is usefull and helpfull to the good of the whole, soe in this nation or Commonwealth, everie perticuler place in one kinde or another, as it requires helpe from others, soe is usefull unto others." *Ibid.*, xxv, 72.

(186) S.P.D., xxv, 72.

(187) *Ibid.*, xxv, 66.

(188) "For many of them are Merchants and drapers, as their now Maior is a Marchant, and what can they doe but Ingrosse and joyne their money for that purpose, further wee answer that the Ingrossing Staplers in regard to this Corporacon are the better inabled to ingrosse the greatest part of the wooll of this Nation for they can agree together in a joynt Stock." S.P.D., xi, 120.

(189) "If by free Trade be meant absolute free Trade, without any limitation or qualification at all, but every man does what he List, Then wee may as well transport Corne, Wooll and Fullers Earth out of the Nation. . . . And the rich man may Ingrosse all the Corn and other things of Livelyhood into their owne hands, and no man can say why doe you see . . ." S.P.D., xxv, 66.

(190) S.P.D., xv, 209.

(191) *Ibid.*, xxv, 81, 82.

(192) *Ibid.*, xxv, 73, 76.

(193) *Ibid.*, xxv, 78, 79.

(194) *Ibid.*, xxv, 80.

(195) *Ibid.*, xi, 120.

(196) The preamble states that: "The Parliament of England, taking into their care the maintenance and advance of the Traffick Trade, and several Manufactures of this Nation; and being desirous to improve and multiply the same for the best advantage and benefit thereof, to the end that the poore people of this Land may be set on work, and their Families preserved from Beggary and Ruine, and that the Commonwealth might be enriched thereby, and no occasion left either for Idleness or Poverty; And duly weighing, That the Trade of this Nation both at home and abroad, being rightly driven and regularly managed, doth exceedingly conduce to the Strength, Wealth, Honour, and Prosperity thereof; and on the contrary, that the negligent, irregular, and defective management of Trade must necessarily prove disadvantageous to the several Trades in particular, and to the Commonwealth in general . . . enacts and ordains . . . etc."

(197) Firth and Rait, ii, 403. Under Charles I a "committee for trade" was appointed, but it is not clear that it was a permanent body. On this point, see Cunningham, *The Growth of English Industry and Commerce in Modern Times*, i, 175, 199.

(198) See Appendix B (I) and (II).

(199) S.P.D., xvi, 387-8, and 84.

(200) Cf. Sir Benjamin Rudyard's speech on monopolies, *ut sup.* It is significant that during the twenty years of the Interregnum there were only two new incorporations, while from 1624-40 there had been more than in any previous reign. See G. Unwin, *Gilds and Companies*, p. 318.

(201) See Appendix B (I) and (II).

(202) *Petition of the Framework Knitters for Incorporation*, 1655, E. 863 (4).

(203) *Cal. of S.P.D.*, 1656-7, p. 268.

(204) *Cal. of S.P.D.*, 1658-9, p. 215.

(205) See *The Company of Needlemakers*, 1876, p. 1, Guildhall Library.

The author is unknown, but was probably the Clerk of the Company.

(206) *Cal. of S.P.D.*, 1651-2, p. 515.

(207) *Mercurius Politicus*, 19-26th Dec., 1656, Burney Coll. 36a.

(208) Firth and Rait, i, 37.

(209) *Ibid.*, i, 285.

(210) *Ibid.*, ii, 420.

(211) *Cal. of S.P.D.*, 1654, p. 295.

(212) *Hist. MSS. Comm., Various Coll. I, Wiltshire Quarter Session Records*, p. 114.

(213) E. B. Jupp, *Historical Account of the Worshipful Company of Carpenters*, 1887, p. 482.

(214) *Hertford County Records, ut sup.*, i, 88, 102, 110.

On this point, see also O. J. Dunlop and R. D. Denman, *op. cit.*, pp. 107-9. See also vol. v of the *Hertford County Records*, pp. 307, 352, 491, 497, 501, 503, 506, for similar instances of presentment for evasion of the apprenticeship laws.

(215) This view is held by W. Cunningham, *Growth of English Industry*, i, 48.

It seems likely that investigations now proceeding will at least modify the older view. Cf. E. Waterman, "Some New Evidence on Wage Assessments in the Eighteenth Century," *English Historical Review*, July, 1928.

(216) *C.J.*, vi, 180.

(217) *C.J.*, vii, 435.

(218) R. H. Tawney, "The Assessment of Wages by the Justices of the Peace," in the *Vierteljahrschrift für Sozial und Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, Bd. xi, 1913. I have discovered no fresh assessments for the period 1640-60, though, as appears below, there are indications both in Hertfordshire and the North Riding, that assessments were issued during this period.

(219) *North Riding Quarter Session Records*, iv, 270.

(220) *Hertfordshire County Records*, *ut sup.*, i, 116.

(221) T. Rogers, *op. cit.*, v, 826.

(222) J. Cooke, *Unum Necessarium*, *ut sup.*

(223) T. Rogers, *op. cit.*, vi, 694.

(224) *Ibid.*

(225) J. C. Cox, *op. cit.*, ii, 239 *seq.*

(226) *Quarter Session Records for the County of Somerset*, ed. E. H. Bates Harbin, 1912, iii, 66, 121, 151, 176, 236, 263.

(227) T. Rogers, *op. cit.*, v, 826.

(228) *Considerations concerning Common Fields and Enclosures*, *ut sup.*

(229) *A Vindication of Considerations, etc.*, *ut sup.*

(230) *Hist. MSS. Comm., Various Coll. I, Wiltshire Quarter Session Records*, p. 132.

(231) In each case of wage assessments under the Commonwealth it is clear that the justices are fixing a maximum wage.

(232) *Wiltshire Quarter Session Records*, *ut sup.*, p. 170.

(233) *West Riding Quarter Session Records*, *ut sup.*, ii, 333.

(234) H. Heaton, "The Assessment of Wages in the West Riding of Yorkshire in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," *Economic Journal*, xxiv, 218 *seq.*

(235) *Proclamation by the Mayor*, 1655, 21. h. 5 (61). And see also The Scout, 18-25th May, 1655, Burney Coll., 48a.

(236) R. H. Tawney, "The Assessment of Wages," *ut sup.*

(237) See Chapter I.

(238) *An Abstract of the Master Tailors' Bill before the House of Commons*, 1720, Guildhall Library.

(239) *A Clear and Evident Way for Enriching the Nations of England and Ireland*, 1650, E. 596 (10). Cf. H. Robinson, *Briefe Considerations*, *ut sup.*

(240) S. Smith, *A True Narrative of the Royall Fishings*, *ut sup.*

(241) *The Seas Magazine Opened*, *ut sup.* And cf. "Propositions for a Fishing Trade," Stowe MSS. 152, f. 67.

(242) See below, Chapter VI, Section (IV).

(243) *A Clear and Evident Way for Enriching the Nations, etc.*, *ut sup.*

(244) With remarkable insight, Violet declares: "And this I humbly conceive is like shortly to be the fate of a great Kingdom, I mean France; the inventions for gathering money there being so many, that the common people, their life is bitter to them, and in all likelihood will end in the ruin of their taskmasters; for the furie of an enraged people and the break of an enraged sea is one and the same." T. Violet, *The Advancement of Merchandize*, 1651, E. 1070 (I).

(245) *Ibid.*

(246) "A Brief Discourse concerning the Trade, Bullion, and Money of England," Addit. MSS. 10402, f. 10.

(247) *Free Ports, the Necessity and Nature of them Stated*, 1652, 669, f. 18 (3).

(248) *C.J.*, vi, 336.

(249) Firth and Rait, ii, 403.

(250) *Journal*, 41, f. 67 b.

(251) For the ordinance against which they petitioned, see Firth and Rait, ii, 222. By an ordinance of 1643 goods might be re-exported duty free. *Ibid.*, i, 202.

(252) *S.P.D.*, lxx, 83, 85 *seq.*

(253) *Cal. of S.P.D.*, 1654, p. 119.

(254) *Ibid.*, p. 149.

(255) Firth and Rait, ii, 889.

(256) *Cal. of S.P.D.*, 1654, p. 118.

(257) Firth and Rait, ii, 889.

(258) J. S. Burn, *The History of the French, Walloon, Dutch, and other Foreign Protestant Refugees Settled in England*, 1846, p. 40.

(259) *Ibid.*, p. 16.

(260) Cobbett, *Collection of State Trials*, 1809, iv, 315 *seq.*

(261) *Sir T. Roe's Speech in Parliament*, *ut sup.*, p. 436.

(262) L. Roberts, *The Treasure of Traffic*, *ut sup.*

(263) T. Violet, *Advancement of Merchandize*, *ut sup.*

(264) Propositions for a Fishing Trade. Stowe MSS., *ut sup.* For the large number of merchants among the Protestant refugees, see *Lists of Foreign Protestants and Aliens Resident in England, 1618-83*, ed. W. Durrant Cooper (Camden Soc., vol. lxxvii).

(265) W. Moens, "The Walloons and their Church at Norwich," *Huguenot Society of London*, vol. v, 1887-8, p. 98.

(266) *L.J.*, v, 566.

(267) See D. Agnew, *Protestant Exiles from France*, 1886, i, 134-6.

(268) *L.J.*, viii, 193.

(269) Firth and Rait, i, 845.

(270) *C.J.*, v, 522.

(271) W. Cunningham, *Alien Immigrants to England*, 1897, p. 208 *seq.*

(272) See Chapter III, Section (IV) for some account of the fenmen's opposition.

(273) *L.J.*, vii, 706-7.

(274) G. H. Overend, "The First Thirty Years of the Foreign Settlement in Axholme, 1626-56," *Huguenot Society of London*, ii, 281 *seq.*

(275) *Cal. of S.P.D.*, 1655-6, pp. 269, 270.

(276) *Cal. of S.P.D.*, 1655, p. 366.

(277) *Cal. of S.P.D.*, 1655-6, p. 390.

(278) *Petition on Behalf of the Poor Tradesmen*, 1641, 669, f. 4 (27).

(279) *The Petition of the Apprentices in and near London*, 1641, E. 180 (18).

(280) *C.J.*, ii, 405.

(281) *Cal. of S.P.D.*, 1654, p. 149.

(282) *Journal*, 41, f. 10.

(283) *Journal*, 41, f. 154 b.

(284) *Journal*, 41, f. 156 b.

(285) W. Sombart, *The Jews and Modern Capitalism*, 1913, p. 17.

(286) A. M. Hyamson, *A History of the Jews in England*, 1908, p. 171.

(287) L. Wolf, *Crypto-Jews under the Commonwealth*, 1894, *passim*.

(288) L. Wolf, "The First English Jew," *Trans. Jewish Hist. Soc.*, vol. ii, 1894-5, p. 16.

(289) *Hist. MSS. Comm., Rept. VI, MSS. of House of Lords*, p. 8.

(290) *Cal. of S.P.D.*, 1649-50, p. 255.

(291) L. Wolf, "The First English Jew," *ut sup.*, p. 18.

(292) *S.P.D.*, cxxiv, 20.

(293) Quoted by L. Wolf, "The First English Jew," p. 26, from the Rawlinson MSS.

(294) A. M. Hyamson, *op. cit.*, p. 172.

(295) See L. Wolf, "The First English Jew," *ut sup.*, p. 14.

(296) L. Wolf, *Menasseh ben Israel's Mission to Cromwell*, 1901, p. xxi.

(297) *The Petition of the Jewes*, 1648, E. 587 (17).

(298) See L. Wolf, *Menasseh ben Israel's Mission*, *ut sup.*, p. 78 *seq.*

(299) E.g. *The Devilish Conspiracy Committed by the Jews*, 1649, E. 550 (16).

(300) *A Brief Answer to Some of the Objections made against the Coming of the Jews*, 1656, E. 866 (1).

(301) J. Dury, *A Case of Conscience*, 1656, E. 882 (1).

(302) W. Sombart, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

(303) A. M. Hyamson, *op. cit.*, p. 176.

(304) Egerton MSS. 1049, f. 7. For a transcript of part of Dormido's petition, see Appendix B (111).

(305) *A Narrative of the Late Proceedings at Whitehall concerning the Jews*, 1656, Harl. Misc., vii, 621. See also *Ben Israel's Mission*, *ut sup.*

(306) J. Evelyn, *Diary*, ed. W. Bray, 1906, p. 214.

(307) L. Wolf, *Menasseh ben Israel's Mission*, *ut sup.*, p. lxxi *seq.*

(308) W. Sombart, *op. cit.*, p. 88.

NOTES TO CHAPTER V, THE DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT IN THE GILDS AND CITY GOVERNMENT

- (1) For the preceding sketch of Gild development, see G. Unwin, *Gilds and Companies, ut sup., passim*.
- (2) G. Unwin, *Industrial Organization, ut sup.*, p. 196 *seq.*
- (3) I have found no traces in the printed records of the towns of a democratic movement in the gilds outside London.
- (4) T. Edwards, *Gangraena*, pts. i and ii, E. 323 (2) and E. 338 (12).
- (5) *An Outcry of the Young Men and Apprentices of London*, 1649, 669, f. 14 (30).
- (6) Whitelocke, *Memorials*, ii, 182.
- (7) Perfect Diurnall, 1st-8th March, 1646. Burney Coll. 26 a.
- (8) *London's Ancient Privileges Unveiled*, 1648, 669, f. 13 (23).
- (9) G. Unwin, *Industrial Organization, ut sup.*, pp. 9-10.
- (10) Goldsmiths' Court Book, 1648-51, f. 205 b.
- (11) *Ibid.*, f. 207.
- (12) *Ibid.*, f. 258 b.
- (13) Goldsmiths' Court Book, 1651-4, f. 66.
- (14) *Ibid.*, f. 68.
- (15) See Appendix C (1).
- (16) Goldsmiths' Court Book, 1651-4, f. 118 *seq.*
- (17) *Ibid.*, f. 124. In November, 1652, the total amount due from the state to the Goldsmiths was £22,520 9s. 8d. See W. S. Prideaux, *op. cit.*, ii, 15-17.
- (18) Goldsmiths' Court Book, 1651-4, f. 128 b *seq.*
- (19) *Ibid.*, f. 137.
- (20) For the depression in the clothing trade, see above, Chapter II, Section (11).
- (21) Clothworkers' Court Book, 1639-49, f. 30 b.
- (22) Clothworkers' Court Book, 1639-49, f. 47 b.
- (23) *Ibid.*, f. 49 b.
- (24) *Ibid.*, f. 51.
- (25) *Ibid.*, f. 115 b.
- (26) Clothworkers' Court Book, 1639-49, f. 179.
- (27) *Ibid.*, f. 180.
- (28) *Ibid.*, f. 182 b.
- (29) *Ibid.*, f. 184 b.
- (30) *Ibid.*, f. 185 b.
- (31) See Appendix C (II).
- (32) Clothworkers' Court Book, 1639-49, f. 187 b.
- (33) *Ibid.*, f. 198.
- (34) *Ibid.*, f. 199.
- (35) *Ibid.*, f. 200 b.
- (36) *Ibid.*, 1639-49, f. 202 b.
- (37) *Ibid.*, f. 211 b.
- (38) *Ibid.*, 1649-65, f. 9.
- (39) *Ibid.*, 1649-65, f. 10 b.
- (40) *Ibid.*, f. 11 b, and cf. 12 b.

- (41) *Ibid.*, f. 15 b.
- (42) Clothworkers' Court Book, 1649-65, f. 18 seq.
- (43) *Ibid.*, f. 19 b.
- (44) G. Unwin, *Industrial Organization*, *ut sup.*, p. 209.
- (45) *Government of the Fullers, Shearmen and Clothworkers as Proved by their Charters*, c. 1650, Guildhall Library.
- (46) These were the Wardens of the Yeomanry. For the Yeomanry organization, see C. M. Clode, *Memorials of the Merchant Taylors*, 1875, p. 24.
- (47) Merchant Taylors' Court Book, 1636-54, f. 327.
- (48) *Ibid.*, f. 333 b. See Appendix C (III).
- (49) *Ibid.*, f. 333 b.
- (50) *Ibid.*, ff. 332, 237 b.
- (51) *Ibid.*, f. 338 b.
- (52) *Ibid.*, f. 422.
- (53) C. M. Clode, *op. cit.*, p. 28.
- (54) Saddlers' Court Book, vol. i, f. 269 b.
- (55) *C.J.*, vii, 178.
- (56) *A New Year's Gift for England and all her Cities, Ports, and Corporations*, 1653, E. 684 (19).
- (57) S. E. Atkins and W. H. Overall, *Some Account of the Worshipful Company of Clockmakers*, 1881, pp. 60-4.
- (58) W. M. Williams, *Annals of the Founders' Company*, 1867, pp. 108-9.
- (59) *Abstract of the Grievances of the Poor Freemen and Journeymen Printers to the House of Commons*, Guildhall Library (no date).
- (60) *Petition of the Masters and Workmen Printers of London*, 1642, 669, f. 4 (79).
- (61) *The Humble Petition of the Workmen Printers*, 1659, 669, f. 21 (19).
- (62) Carpenters' Court Book, 1635-56, 15th Aug., 1644. No folios are marked.
- (63) *Ibid.*, 13th June, 1640.
- (64) *Ibid.*, 24th Nov., 1647.
- (65) *Ibid.*, 29th Jan., 1650.
- (66) *C.J.*, v, 187.
- (67) Journal 40, f. 290 b.
- (68) *C.J.*, v, 641.
- (69) *C.J.*, v, 644.
- (70) *Case of the Commonalty of Weavers*, c. 1650, Guildhall Library.
- (71) *C.J.*, v, 652.
- (72) *C.J.*, v, 658.
- (73) *L.J.*, x, 427.
- (74) Weavers' Court Book, vol. iv, 3rd Oct., 1648. The folios are very indistinct.
- (75) *Case of the Commonalty of the Weavers*, *ut sup.*
- (76) *A Breviate of the Weavers' Business before the House of Commons*, 1648, E. 455 (6).
- (77) *C.J.*, vi, 105.
- (78) *Ibid.*, vi, 107.
- (79) *Ibid.*, vi, 122.
- (80) *Ibid.*, vi, 127.
- (81) *Ibid.*, vi, 148.
- (82) *Ibid.*, vi, 161.
- (83) The Weavers' Act does not appear in any of the obvious sources.
- (84) Weavers' Court Book, April, 1652.
- (85) *Ibid.*, 15th Aug., 1653.
- (86) *Ibid.*, 5th Sept., 1653.
- (87) *Ibid.*, 26th June, 1654.
- (88) *Case of the Commonalty of the Weavers*, *ut sup.*
- (89) Weavers' Court Book, 26th Feb., 1655.
- (90) *Ibid.*, 24th Oct., 1653.

- (91) *Ibid.*, 4th Sept., 1654.
- (92) C. Welch, *History of the Cutlers' Company of London*, 1923, ii, p. 206 *seq.*
- (93) Cutlers' Court Book, 1602-67, f. 375.
- (94) *Ibid.*, 1602-7, f. 382 b.
- (95) *Ibid.*, 13th June, 1663.
- (96) Leathersellers' Court Book, 1632-50, 20th Oct., 1646, and 4th July, 1649.
- (97) *Ibid.*, 19th Oct., 1649.
- (98) Leathersellers' Court Book, 1650-73, 20th July, 1656.
- (99) *Ibid.*, 21st July, 1656.
- (100) *Ibid.*, 5th Aug., 1656.
- (101) Rep. 55, f. 196.
- (102) Pewterers' Court Book, 1611-45, f. 339 b.
- (103) Rep. 55, f. 302 b.
- (104) Pewterers' Court Book, 1611-45, f. 341.
- (105) *Ibid.*, f. 342 b.
- (106) Two other companies in which there are early indications of agitation are those of the Watermen and Woodmongers. In May, 1641, the overseers and rulers of the Watermen's Company laid before the House of Lords a complaint as to the unseemly and even violent behaviour of some of their members. The leader of the rebels, a certain J. Church, on being told that he ought to be obedient to law, order, and the Lord Mayor, answered: "That it was Parliament time now, and that the Lord Mayor had nothing to do with them, and that the Lord Mayor was but their slave." Annexed to this petition was a statement of grievances put forward by the rank and file of the Watermen. They declared that the limits over which the Company exercised jurisdiction were too narrow, that their privileges were not always regarded, and, finally, that the government of the Company needed revision. Some change, the exact nature of which they do not specify, should be made in the method of electing the Master and Overseers of the Company, and the various orders for the government of the craft should be made by the Master, Overseers, and most able of the generality. *Hist. MSS. Comm., Rept. IV, House of Lords' MSS.*, pp. 61-2. In June, 1641, certain members of the Woodmongers' Company complained to the House of Lords of the oppressive laws made by their Master and Wardens, contrary to the Company's charter, and prayed for redress. *Hist. MSS. Comm., Rept. IV, House of Lords' MSS.*, p. 76.
- (107) G. Unwin, *Industrial Organization*, *ut sup.*, p. 211 *seq.*
- (108) A. Pulling, writing in 1849, said: "Unlike other municipalities, the city of London has not at this day any governing charter in the usual sense of the term, or any comprehensive charter by which the elections, powers and functions of the ruling bodies and principal functionaries are regulated, or defined." A. Pulling, *A Practical Treatise on the Laws, Customs, Usages, and Regulations of the City and Port of London*, 1849, p. 13.
- (109) See A. Pulling, *op. cit.*, *passim*.
- (110) R. R. Sharpe, *London and the Kingdom*, 1894, ii, 279.
- (111) *Ibid.*, ii, 318-19.
- (112) J. Lilburne, *London's Liberties in Chains*, 1646, Guildhall Library.
- (113) *Ibid.*
- (114) J. Lilburne, *Postscript written in the Tower*, *ut sup.*
- (115) J. Lilburne, *The Charters of London or the Second Part of London's Liberty in Chains*, 1646, Guildhall Library. Lilburne declares that: "The only and sole legislative Lawmaking power is originally inherent in the people and derivatively in their commissions chosen by themselves by common consent and no other. . . . But the Lord Mayor and Aldermen were never chosen by the Commons of London . . . to sit in Common Council to vote and make Lawes to binde them, but meerly and at the most, are officers, chosen and betruſted for no other end at all but for the better being, peace and prosperity of the City."

- (116) *London's Ancient Privileges Unveiled*, 1648, 669, f. 13 (23).
 (117) J. Bellamie, *A Plea for the Commonalty of London*, 1645, Guildhall Library.
 (118) J. Bellamie, *Lysimachus Enervatus*, 1645, Guildhall Library.
 (119) *Irenaeus Lysimachus. Bellamius Enervatus*, 1645, Guildhall Library.
 (120) *The Humble Remonstrance and Petition of the Lord Mayor, Aldermen and Commons of the City*, 1646, Guildhall Library.
 (121) J. Bellamie, *A moderate Reply to the Citie Remonstrance*, 1646, Guildhall Library.
 (122) *A Vindication of the City Remonstrance*, 1646, Guildhall Library.
 (123) *The Humble Desires of the Freemen of the City of London*, 1647, Guildhall Library.
 (124) *The Necessity of the Speedy Calling of a Common Hall*, 1648, Goldsmiths' Library.
 (125) *L.J.*, iv, 293.
 (126) *Ibid.*, iv, 305.
 (127) *Ibid.*, iv, 316.
 (128) *Ibid.*, iv, 317.
 (129) *Ibid.*, iv, 329.
 (130) *Ibid.*, iv, 336.
 (131) *Ibid.*, iv, 373.
 (132) *Journal*, 40, f. 21 *seq.*
 (133) The writer says: "God hath in these late Times brought to light many memorable discoveries of this Captivation and undue Subjection of the English People, and more particularly of the many stratagems and delusive Arts whereby the Citizens of London and the Commonalties in other Cities and Burrough Townes, are deprived of their rights in Elections, and the knowledge of the Liberties, Charters and Transactions belonging to and passing from them; whereby they are kept in ignorance of their respective Revenues, and are engaged many times beyond and against their Consent." *Newes from Guildhall*, 1650, E. 620 (5).
 (134) *Journal*, 41, f. 7 b.
 (135) *Journal* 41, f. 36 b.
 (136) *London's Liberties or a Learned Argument of Law and Reason*, 1650, E. 620 (7). For a later account of the same agitation, see W. Payne, *A Treatise on Municipal Rights*, 1813, p. 72 *seq.*
 (137) *Rep.* 60, f. 252.
 (138) Goldsmiths' Court Book, 1648-51, f. 205 b.
 (139) A. H. Johnson, *The History of the Worshipful Company of Drapers*, Oxford, 1922, iii, 224. And J. Nicholl, *Some Account of the Worshipful Company of Ironmongers*, 1866, p. 292 *seq.*
 (140) *Journal* 41, f. 64 b.
 (141) *Journal* 41, f. 65 b. The date of this Act is 4th Nov., 1651.
 (142) Goldsmiths' Court Book, 1651-4, f. 286.
 (143) *C.J.*, vii, 53.
 (144) Books of Common Hall, *passim*. *E.g.*, bk. iii, f. 340.
 (145) *Journal* 41, f. 207 b.
 (146) J. Lilburne, *London's Liberties*, *ut sup.*
 (147) *Newes from Guildhall*, *ut sup.*
 (148) *Journal* 41, f. 8 b.
 (149) *Journal* 41, f. 9.
 (150) *Journal* 41, f. 12 b. *seq.*
 (151) *Ibid.*
 (152) *Ibid.*, 41, ff. 53, 54.
 (153) *Rep.* 61, f. 236 b.
 (154) *Journal* 41, f. 73 b.
 (155) The writer explains that: "It was the custom of old to stand (not sit) and always to be uncovered until the beginning of the late confusions in 1642. . . . And it is sufficiently known as in divine matters how familiar and saucy the people have made themselves with God since the boys have

put their hats on in the Churches. So in the Common Council how familiar the Commons (who in the trouble were generally the meaner sort of people) have grown with their sovereigns." Some Extraordinary Passages in Common Council, Guildhall MSS., Small MSS. Box iv, No. 3.

(156) The Manner of Passing Acts of Common Council, Guildhall MSS., R. Turner, No. 74, f. 223.

(157) Some Extraordinary Passages in Common Council, *ut sup.*

(158) Rep. 57, pt. ii, f. 45b.

(159) Journal 40, f. 126 *seq.*

(160) S. R. Gardiner, *History of the Commonwealth*, *ut sup.*, i, 38.

(161) Firth and Rait, i, 1140, 1166.

(162) *C.J.*, vi, 116.

(163) *Ibid.*, vi, 117.

(164) Journal 40, f. 314. For account of this meeting see Appendix D (I).

(165) *C.J.*, vi, 118.

(166) *Ibid.*, vi, 152.

(167) Journal 40, f. 312. See also Appendix D (II).

(168) Journal 41, f. 4b.

(169) *Ibid.*, 41, f. 26b.

(170) *Ibid.*, 41, f. 84.

(171) Rep. 61, f. 39b.

(172) Rep. 61, f. 238.

(173) Rep. 62, f. 17 b *seq.*

(174) Journal 41, f. 219 *seq.*

(175) Some Extraordinary Passages in Common Council, *ut sup.*

NOTES TO CHAPTER VI, THE RELIEF OF THE POOR

- (1) E. M. Leonard, *Early History of English Poor Relief*, *ut sup.*, *passim*.
- (2) *Ibid.*, p. 237 *seq.*
- (3) *Ibid.*, p. 246.
- (4) *Ibid.*, p. 161.
- (5) *Ibid.*, p. 163.
- (6) *Hist. MSS. Comm., Rept. IV, MSS. of House of Lords*, p. 90.
- (7) For the main causes of the increase of poverty, see Chapter II above.
- (8) *Petition of Many Thousands of Poor People*, 1641, 669, f. 4. (54).
- (9) *Petition of 1,500 Poor Labouring Men*, 1641, 669, f. 4. (55).
- (10) *Mr. Grimston's Speech in Parliament*, *ut sup.* One of the special causes of increased poverty at this time seems to have been the influx of poor people from Ireland. In 1642, the under-sheriff of Northampton was ordered to disburse £20 for their relief, and, later in the same year, the Committee for Ireland was directed to restrict the great numbers of poor and despoiled Irish who were migrating to England. *C.J.*, ii, 633, 765.
- (11) *C.J.*, ii, 821.
- (12) *Victoria County History, Lancashire*, ii, 298-9.
- (13) J. Touzeau, *op. cit.*, i, 223-4.
- (14) B. Whitelocke, *op. cit.*, iii, 92.
- (15) *Ibid.*, iii, 23-4.
- (16) See W. Kennedy, *op. cit.*, *passim*.
- (17) T. Hobbes, *op. cit.*, p. 251.
- (18) *Severall Particulars shewing the Conveniences of Receiving Excise at the Custom House*, 1650, 669, f. 15 (9).
- (19) *Declaration of the Common Councilmen*, 1649, E. 550 (33).
- (20) *C.J.*, v, 91. The "Heads of Proposals" demanded that excise should be taken off "from such commodities whereon the poor people of the land do ordinarily live". Ed. S. R. Gardiner, *Constitutional Documents*, p. 324.
- (21) J. Lee, *A Remonstrance Presented to Parliament*, 1644, E. 273 (8). Even those soldiers who were capable of continuing their ordinary work sometimes found difficulties in doing so. The Mayor of Rye stated in 1651 that many complaints had been made by tradesmen of the town concerning the large number of demobilized soldiers who had set up their trades in Rye. *Hist. MSS. Comm., XIII*, pt. 4, *Rye MSS.*, p. 217.
- (22) For reports of the Hospitals, see Appendix E.
- (23) *Report of the Great Costs and Charges of the Hospitals*, 1644, 669, f. 10 (2).
- (24) *Ibid.*
- (25) *Ibid.*, 1647, 669, f. 11 (5).
- (26) *Report of Costs and Charges*, 1648, 669, f. 11 (40).
- (27) *Ibid.*, 1649, 669, f. 14 (11).
- (28) *Ibid.*, 1653, 669, f. 16 (94).
- (29) Firth and Rait, i, 570.
- (30) *Exclamatio Pauperum*, 1648, E. 452 (26).
- (31) *A! Ha! Christmas*, 1647, E. 421 (5).
- (32) J. Cooke, *Unum Necessarium*, *ut sup.*
- (33) S. Hartlib, *London's Charity*, 1649, E. 572 (16).
- (34) *A Charitable Churchwarden*, 1641, E. 176 (2). And cf. E. 180 (12).
- (35) *Two Knaves for a Penny*, 1647, E. 412(I).
- (36) In their *History of the English Poor Law*, pt. i, 1927, p. 98, the Webbs point out that, during the Interregnum, the overseers ceased to be concerned

exclusively with the business of poor relief. They had to collect money for all sorts of purposes, and therefore it may be assumed that their attention was to some extent diverted from the duty of relieving the poor.

- (37) *Somerset Quarter Session Records, ut sup.*, iii, 3.
- (38) *Ibid.*, iii, 7.
- (39) *Ibid.*, iii, 1.
- (40) *Hertford County Records, ut sup.*, i, 75.
- (41) *Three Centuries of Derbyshire Annals, ut sup.*, ii, 161.
- (42) *Somerset Quarter Session Records, ut sup.*, iii, 30.
- (43) *Ibid.*, iii, 34.
- (44) *Ibid.*, iii, 35, and cf. 49.
- (45) *Ibid.*, iii, 101.
- (46) *Ibid.*, iii, 42.
- (47) *Ibid.*, iii, 48.
- (48) *N. Riding Quarter Session Records, ut sup.*, iv, 185.
- (49) *Ibid.*, iv, 204.
- (50) *Ibid.*, iv, 229.
- (51) *Ibid.*, iv, 273.
- (52) *Ibid.*, v, 17.
- (53) *Ibid.*, v, 58.
- (54) *W. Riding Quarter Session Records, ut sup.*, ii, 224.
- (55) *Ibid.*, ii, 257.
- (56) *Ibid.*, ii, 299.
- (57) *Ibid.*, ii, 300.
- (58) *Ibid.*, ii, 301.
- (59) *Northamptonshire Quarter Session Records, ut sup.*, p. 188.
- (60) *Orders of the Shropshire Quarter Session*, ed. R. Lloyd Kenyon, i, 57, 60.
- (61) *Three Centuries of Derbyshire Annals, ut sup.*, ii, 141.
- (62) *Cal. of S.P.D.*, 1655-6, p. 194.
- (63) S. Richardson, *The Cause of the Poor Pleaded*, 1653, E. 703 (9).
- (64) *Leicester Records, ut sup.*, pp. 329, 342, 354.
- (65) *Ibid.*, p. 381.
- (66) *Cal. of S.P.D.*, 1651, p. 298.
- (67) *Records of Reading, ut sup.*, iv, 159, 166.
- (68) *Hist. MSS. Comm., Various Colls., Rept. IV, Records of Orford*, p. 268.
- (69) *Hist. MSS. Comm., Various Colls., Rep. I, Records of Berwick*, p. 17.
- (70) E. M. Leonard, *Early History of English Poor Relief, ut sup.*, p. 20.
- (71) T. Burton, *op. cit.*, i, 82.
- (72) *L.J.*, iv, 129.
- (73) *C.J.*, iv, 153.
- (74) *Ibid.*, iv, 344.
- (75) *Ibid.*, v, 421.
- (76) *Ibid.*, vi, 267.
- (77) *Ibid.*, vii, 455.
- (78) *Proclamation by the Commissioners for Charitable Uses, 1655, 669*, f. 20 (16).
- (79) *Records of Leicester, ut sup.*, p. 444.
- (80) *Ibid.*, p. 445.
- (81) *Cal. of S.P.D.*, 1655-6, p. 174.
- (82) T. Burton, *op. cit.*, i, 82-3.
- (83) *Cal. of S.P.D.*, 1657-8, p. 226.
- (84) *Ibid.*, 1656-7, p. 264.
- (85) *Ibid.*, 1655-6, pp. 96, 115.
- (86) Firth and Rait, i, 36.
- (87) *Ibid.*, i, 102.
- (88) *Ibid.*, i, 328.
- (89) *Ibid.*, i, 938.
- (90) *C.J.*, iii, 55.
- (91) *Ibid.*, iii, 218.

- (92) See above, Section (I) of this chapter.
- (93) *L.J.*, viii, 53.
- (94) *Ibid.*, ix, 346.
- (95) *Nottinghamshire County Records*, ed. H. Hampton Copnall, Nottingham, 1915, p. 95.
- (96) *Records of Reading*, *ut sup.*, iv, 424.
- (97) *L.J.*, ix, 610.
- (98) E. M. Leonard, *History of English Poor Relief*, *ut sup.*, p. 199.
- (99) *L.J.*, iv, 127.
- (100) *Ibid.*, iv, 128.
- (101) This is probably a reference to the Newcastle Coal Gild. See above, Chap. IV, Section (I).
- (102) *L.J.*, iv, 131-2.
- (103) *Ibid.*, v, 546.
- (104) *Ibid.*, v, 554.
- (105) Firth and Rait, i, 63.
- (106) *Ibid.*, i, 569.
- (107) *Sea Coale, Charcoale, and Smallcoale*, 1643, E. 86 (20).
- (108) *Artificial Fire or Coal for Rich and Poor*, 1644, 669, f. 10 (II).
- (109) *The Two Grand Engrossers of Coal*, 1653, E. 725 (8).
- (110) Perfect Diurnall, 30th Jan. to 6th Feb., 1642-3, Burney Coll. 15a.
- (111) Firth and Rait, i, 83.
- (112) *C.J.*, iii, 121, and cf. iii, 47.
- (113) *Ibid.*, iii, 561.
- (114) *Ibid.*, iii, 668.
- (115) *Ibid.*, iii, 709.
- (116) *Ibid.*, vi, 126.
- (117) *C.J.*, vii, 227.
- (118) *Ibid.*, vii, 245-6.
- (119) *Ibid.*, iii, 459.
- (120) *Ibid.*, vi, 21.
- (121) *Ibid.*, iv, 85.
- (122) *Ibid.*, vi, 21.
- (123) Firth and Rait, i, 303.
- (124) *Ibid.*, i, 481.
- (125) *C.J.*, iii, 551.
- (126) *Proclamation by the Mayor*, 1644, 669, f. 9 (9).
- (127) *E.g. Rep.* 60, f. 203. And *Journal* 41, f. 35.
- (128) *Rep.* 56, f. 209.
- (129) *Journal* 40, f. 100.
- (130) *Rep.* 57, pt. i, f. 228b.
- (131) *Rep.* 56, f. 185. And *Rep.* 57, pt. ii, f. 179.
- (132) *Rep.* 57, pt. ii, f. 68.
- (133) *Journal* 40, f. 117b.
- (134) *Ibid.*, f. 287.
- (135) E. M. Leonard, *Early History of English Poor Relief*, *ut sup.* pp. 23-4.
- (136) *Ibid.*, p. 193.
- (137) *God's Blessing upon the Providers of Corn*, 1648, E. 419 (26).
- (138) *Two Knaves for a Penny*, *ut sup.*
- (139) J. Cooke, *Unum Necessarium*, *ut sup.*
- (140) *C.J.*, vi, 137.
- (141) *Ibid.*, vi, 167.
- (142) *Ibid.*, vi, 179, 181, 183.
- (143) *Ibid.*, vi, 441.
- (144) Firth and Rait, ii, 442.
- (145) *Cal. of S.P.D.*, 1654, p. 140.
- (146) *C.J.*, iii, 400.
- (147) *Ibid.*, iii, 439.
- (148) See below, p. 270.

- (149) *C.J.*, iii, 359.
- (150) *Ibid.*, iii, 547.
- (151) *Ibid.*, vii, 374.
- (152) *Ibid.*, vii, 379.
- (153) Firth and Rait, ii, 1043-4.
- (154) *Hist. MSS. Comm., Various Coll., I, Wiltshire Quarter Session Records*, p. 115.
- (155) *Ibid.*, p. 116.
- (156) *Ibid.*, p. 117.
- (157) *Somerset Quarter Session Records, ut sup.*, iii, 26.
- (158) *Ibid.*, iii, 51.
- (159) *Ibid.*, iii, 60.
- (160) *Ibid.*, iii, 83-4.
- (161) Books of Common Hall, e.g. i, f. 1b, and i, f. 79b.
- (162) *Ibid.*, ii, f. 13.
- (163) *Ibid.*, ii, f. 114b.
- (164) Rep. 60, ff. 203 and 215.
- (165) Books of Common Hall, iv, f. 164.
- (166) Journal 40, f. 79.
- (167) Rep. 57, pt. i, f. 23b.
- (168) Rep. 57, pt. i, f. 96b.
- (169) See above, p. 266.
- (170) Journal 40, f. 153b.
- (171) *Ibid.*, f. 196b.
- (172) Rep. 58, pt. i, f. 134b.
- (173) Rep. 59, pt. ii, f. 54b.
- (174) Books of Common Hall, ii, f. 98.
- (175) Rep. 59, f. 18b.
- (176) Rep. 61, f. 34.
- (177) Rep. 61, f. 27.
- (178) *The Worth of a Penny*, 1647, E. 399 (6).
- (179) *The Scales of Commerce and Trade*, 1659, E. 1748 (1).
- (180) M. Wren, *Monarchy Asserted, ut sup.*
- (181) *The Lady Pecunia's Journey to Hell*, 1654, 669, f. 17 (75).
- (182) See above, Chapter I, Section (III).
- (183) J. Cooke, *Unum Necessarium, ut sup.*
- (184) *The Poor's Pension*, 1644, E. 10 (2).
- (185) J. Cooke, *Unum Necessarium, ut sup.*
- (186) R. Younge, *The Poor's Advocate*, 1654, E. 1452 (3).
- (187) S. Richardson, *The Cause of the Poor Pleaded, ut sup.*
- (188) R. Younge, *The Poor's Advocate, ut sup.*
- (189) S. Richardson, *The Cause of the Poor, ut sup.* And cf. B. Gerbier, *A New Year's Result, ut sup.*
- (190) P. Chamberlen, *The Poor Man's Advocate*, 1649, E. 552 (I). Peter Chamberlen was the great-grandson of William Chamberlen, a French Protestant who settled in England during Elizabeth's reign. See *Dict. Nat. Biog.*, iv, 14-15.
- (191) S. Hartlib, *London's Charity, ut sup.*
- (192) B. Gerbier, *A New Year's Result, ut sup.*
- (193) S. Hartlib, *The Parliament's Reformation, ut sup.*
- (194) S. Hartlib, *London's Charity, ut sup.*
- (195) S. Hartlib, *Parliament's Reformation, ut sup.*
- (196) S. Hartlib, *London's Charity Enlarged*, 1650, E. 598 (4).
- (197) *The Office and Duty of Churchwardens*, 1652, E. 1319 (2).
- (198) S. Hartlib, *London's Charity Enlarged, ut sup.*
- (199) B. Gerbier, *A New Year's Result, ut sup.*
- (200) *The Office and Duty of Churchwardens, ut sup.* In the latest volume of the Hertfordshire records there are references to attempts made at this time to arrive at a more satisfactory system of rating. The inhabitants of several parishes ask that personal estates and "visible abilities" may be

taken into account as well as land. See *Hertfordshire County Records*, 1928, v, 810, 393, 419, 426.

(201) S. Hartlib, *Parliament's Reformation*, *ut sup.*

(202) *The Office and Duty of Churchwardens*, and cf. P. Chamberlen, *Poor Man's Advocate*, *ut sup.*

(203) S. Hartlib, *Parliament's Reformation*.

Here again, the Hertfordshire records contain an interesting parallel in the realm of practical administration. In 1648 the inhabitants of Berkhamstead St. Peter asked the justices if they might receive some help from other parishes in the county, the numbers of their poor being great and their resources small. *Hertfordshire County Records*, v, 381.

(204) A Perfect Diurnall, 5-12th June, 1652, Burney Coll., 41a.

(205) T. Laurence, *Some Pitty on the Poor*, *ut sup.*

(206) P. Chamberlen, *The Poor Man's Advocate*, *ut sup.*

(207) The Faithful Scout, 23-30th Jan., 1652, Burney Coll. 41a.

(208) S. Hartlib, *London's Charity Enlarged*, *ut sup.*

(209) R. Younge, *The Poor's Advocate*, *ut sup.*

(210) *The Common Good*, *ut sup.*

(211) *The Office and Duty of Churchwardens*, *ut sup.*

(212) *The Worth of a Penny*, *ut sup.*

(213) See quotations in E. S. Furniss, *op. cit.*, *passim*.

(214) S. Smith, *A True Narration of the Royall Fishings*, *ut sup.*

(215) *The Sea's Magazine Opened*, *ut sup.*

(216) T. Jenner, *London's Blame if not its Shame*, 1651, E. 624 (4).

(217) *Provision for the Poor*, 1649, 669, f. 14 (16).

(218) *C.J.*, iv, 153.

(219) *Ibid.*, v, 138.

(220) *Ibid.*, vi, 160.

(221) *Ibid.*, vi, 167.

(222) *Ibid.*, vi, 201.

(223) Mercurius Pragmaticus, 24th April to 1st May, 1649. Burney Coll. 34a

(224) *C.J.*, vi, 416.

(225) *Ibid.*, vi, 481.

(226) *Ibid.*, vi, 535.

(227) *Ibid.*, vii, 129.

(228) *Votes of Parliament for Setting the Poor on Work*, 1652, 669, f. 16 (49).

(229) *C.J.*, vii, 246.

(230) *Ibid.*, vii, 439.

(231) *Ibid.*, vii, 766.

(232) *Cal. of S.P.D.*, 1649-50, p. 108.

(233) *Ibid.*, 1652-3, p. 15.

(234) *Ibid.*, 1654, p. 245.

(235) *Ibid.*, 1651-2, p. 390.

(236) *E.g. C.J.*, v, 106.

(237) *Ibid.*, vi, 320.

(238) *Ibid.*, vii, 439.

(239) T. Burton, *op. cit.*, i, 21 *seq.*

(240) *Ibid.*, i, 21 *seq.*

(241) Firth and Rait, ii, 1098.

(242) See below, p. 295.

(243) *Quarter Session Records from Elizabeth to Anne (Devonshire)*, *ut sup.*, p. 159.

(244) *Bedfordshire County Records*, Hardy and Page, ii, 42, 46.

(245) *Somerset Quarter Session Records*, *ut sup.*, iii, 3, 4.

(246) *Nottinghamshire County Records*, *ut sup.*, p. 30.

(247) *Somerset Quarter Session Records*, *ut sup.*, iii, 147-8.

(248) *Nottinghamshire County Records*, *ut sup.*, p. 20.

(249) *Ibid.*, pp. 113-14.

(250) *Ibid.*, p. 115.

(251) *Northamptonshire Quarter Session Records, ut sup.*, p. 191.

As an instance of the severe attitude adopted towards vagrants, it may be noted that in 1651 the Hertfordshire justices ordered that a vagrant who became a cripple on the way to his birthplace after conviction and punishment was "to pass as a vagrant notwithstanding". *Hertfordshire County Records*, 1928, v, 417.

(252) *Somerset Quarter Session Records, ut sup.*, iii, 94, and cf. 95.

(253) *Ibid.*, iii, 101.

(254) *Shropshire Quarter Session Records, ut sup.*, i, 43.

(255) *Somerset Quarter Session Records, ut sup.*, iii, 166.

(256) *Ibid.*, iii, 201.

(257) *Shropshire Quarter Session Records, ut sup.*, i, 34.

(258) *North Riding Quarter Session Records, ut sup.*, v, 140-1.

(259) *Northamptonshire Quarter Session Records, ut sup.*, p. 189. Frequent references to the "settlement" system occur in vol. v of the *Hertfordshire Records*. E.g. pp. 281, 307, 372, 375, 385.

(260) *Three Centuries of Derbyshire Annals, ut sup.*, ii, 146.

(261) *Liverpool Vestry Books*, ed. H. Peet, Liverpool, 1912, i, xxii.

(262) *Bedfordshire County Records, ut sup.*, ii, 19, 39.

(263) *Northamptonshire Quarter Session Records, ut sup.*, p. 133.

(264) *Ibid.*, p. 223.

(265) *Somerset Quarter Session Records, ut sup.*, iii, 103.

(266) *Nottinghamshire County Records, ut sup.*, p. 20.

(267) *Hertfordshire County Records, ut sup.*, p. 75. And cf. *Bedfordshire County Records, ut sup.*, ii, 48, 53.

(268) J. Thurloe, *op. cit.*, iii, 590.

(269) *Ibid.*, iv, 266.

(270) *Ibid.*, iv, 241.

(271) *Ibid.*, iv, 545.

(272) *Ibid.*, iv, 523.

(273) *Ibid.*, iv, 719.

(274) *Ibid.*, iv, 341.

(275) *Ibid.*, iv, 496.

(276) *Ibid.*, iv, 695-6.

(277) *Cal. of S.P.D.*, 1656-7, p. 73.

(278) *Nottingham Records*, ed. W. Stevenson, 1900, v, 259.

(279) *Leicester Records, ut sup.*, p. 386.

(280) *Reading Records, ut sup.*, iv, 279.

(281) *Ibid.*, iv, 327.

(282) *Ibid.*, iv, 522.

(283) *Victoria County History, Bucks*, ii, 78.

(284) *Hertfordshire County Records*, 1928, v, 360.

(285) *Ibid.*, p. 400.

(286) *Ibid.*, p. 403.

(287) *Shropshire Quarter Session Records, ut sup.*, i, 51, 63.

(288) *Hist. MSS. Comm., Rept. IX, Pt. I, MSS. of North Riding*, p. 331.

(289) E. M. Leonard, *Early History of English Poor Relief, ut sup.*, p. 275.

(290) A. Kingston, *Hertfordshire during the Civil War, ut sup.*, pp. 54, 182.

(291) See above, Chapter II, Sections (I) and (II).

(292) Rep. 55, f. 411.

(293) Journal 40, f. 145b.

(294) Rep. 56, f. 119b.

(295) Rep. 57, part ii, f. 234.

(296) Journal 40, f. 206.

(297) R. Bush, *The Poor Man's Friend*, 1649, Goldsmiths' Library.

(298) Firth and Rait, i, 1042.

(299) Journal 40, f. 265.

(300) Firth and Rait, ii, 104.

(301) *C.J.*, vi, 226.

(302) *Ibid.*

- (303) *Ibid.*, vi, 481.
- (304) *Journal* 41, f. 5b.
- (305) *Ibid.*, f. 9.
- (306) *Ibid.*, f. 10.
- (307) *C.J.*, vi, 385.
- (308) Books of Common Hall, ii, f. 134b.
- (309) *Ibid.*, v, f. 17, and cf. iv, f. 5b.
- (310) *Ibid.*, i, f. 345. See also iii, 230, and iv, 23b.
- (311) *Order by the Mayor*, 1649, 669, f. 15 (22).
- (312) *Severall Proceedings in Parliament*, 6-18th Feb., 1650-1, Burney Coll, 37a.
- (313) *At a Meeting in S. Margaret's Church*, 1655, E. 1065 (7).
- (314) *The Outcast Children's Song and Cry*, 1653, 669, f. 16 (93).
- (315) *Order by the Mayor*, 1656, 669, f. 20 (21).
- (316) *Publick Intelligencer*, 11-18th Feb., 1656, Burney Coll., 49a.
- (317) Rep. 66, f. 64.
- (318) Rep. 67, f. 6b.
- (319) D. Defoe, *Giving Alms No Charity*, 1704.

NOTES TO CHAPTER VII, PROJECTS OF SOCIAL 'REFORM

(1) Chidley was an inhabitant of Hitchin, and is described by Mr. Hine in his recent history of the town as "a Puritan of Puritans, Fifth Monarchist, Leveller, Lilburnian, Millenarian and all". Although only a "seller of stockings", he was in possession of enough money (£1,874) to purchase the lordship of Hitchin manor. For an account of his life, see R. L. Hine, *History of Hitchin*, 1927, p. 212 *seq.*

(2) *Original Letters Addressed to Oliver Cromwell*, pub. by J. Nicholls, 1743, p. 58.

(3) *Ibid.*, p. 99.

(4) *L.J.*, ix, 83.

(5) J. Harrington, *op. cit.*, p. 14. For an excellent account of Harrington and his Utopia see H. F. Russell Smith, *Harrington and his Oceana*, Cambridge, 1914. Since I cannot improve upon this account, I have not attempted any description of Oceana.

(6) J. Winstanley, *The Law of Freedom in a Platform*, *ut sup.*

(7) See Chapter III, Section (II).

(8) "Your mechanicks, till they have first feathered their nests, like the Fowles of the Ayr, whose whole imployment is to seek their food, are so busied in their private concernment, that they have neither leisure to study the publick, nor are safely to be trusted with it." Harrington, *op. cit.*, p. 119.

(9) S. Hartlib, *A Description of the Famous Kingdom of Macaria*, 1641, E. 173 (28).

(10) P. Cornelius, *A Way Propounded to Make the Poor Happy*, 1659, E. 984 (7). It is possible that "Peter Cornelius" was Hugh Peters, the famous New Army chaplain. A note in the copy of this tract in the Thomason Collection says: "I believe this pamphlet was made by Mr. Hugh Peters, who hath a man named Cornelius Glover." See *Dict. Nat. Biog.*, xv, 963.

(11) W. Covel, *The Method of a Commonwealth*, 1659, Goldsmiths' Library.

(12) *A Modest Plea for an Equal Commonwealth*, 1659, E. 999 (1).

(13) S. Hartlib, *A Brief Discourse Concerning the Accomplishment of our Reformation*, 1647, E. 889 (4).

(14) S. Hartlib, *A Further Discovery of the Office of Public Address for Accommodations*, 1648, Harl. Misc., vi, 14 *seq.*

(15) *The Office of Public Advice*, 1657, 669, f. 20 (59).

(16) H. Robinson, *Office of Addresses and Encounters*, 1650, E. 613 (10).

Even outside London, projects of a similar nature were formed. T. Laurence's scheme for the inhabitants of Marlborough was very much like that of Robinson. See T. Laurence, *Some Pitty on the Poor*, *ut sup.*

(17) See *D.N.B.*, xvii, 14 *seq.* Also W. H. Beveridge, "A Seventeenth Century Labour Exchange," *Economic Journal*, xxiv, 1914.

(18) Robinson says: "We find by Experience that Multitudes of People, of all sorts, both Handicrafts, Artificers, Manufacturers, and others, are brought to poverty and beggery because they doe not timely meet with anyone to Set and continue them at Worke; And yet at the very same time, we likewise meete with multitudes of others . . . that cannot furnish Customers so cheap and speedily as were to be desired, because either they cannot possibly get workfolk or else not at such cheap rates as to make a benefit thereof."

(19) Robinson states: "Wee finde a great cause of beating down the price of poore men's labour is because such poore people are not acquainted with other people's wants besides their own; they have hitherto had no means to come to the speedy knowledge of such persons as stand in as much neede of poore men's labours, as the poore people doe of rich men's moneyes; and therefore the poor man's seeking is rather a begging than a bargaining for employment."

(20) A. F. Leach, *The Schools of Mediaeval England*, 1915.

(21) Foster Watson, "The State and Education under the Commonwealth," in *English Historical Review*, vol. xv, p. 58. I have used this article throughout the section.

(22) Quoted J. E. G. de Montmorency, *State Intervention in English Education*, Cambridge, 1902, p. 84.

(23) J. W. Adamson, *Pioneers of Modern Education*, Cambridge, 1905, pp. 63, 185, 19.

(24) S. Hartlib, *A Brief Discourse concerning the Accomplishment, etc.*, *ut sup.*

(25) J. Dury, *A Seasonable Discourse*, 1649, E. 579 (7).

(26) S. Harmar, *Vox Populi, or Glostershire's Desire*, 1642, E. 146 (2).

(27) J. Milton, *Of Education*, 1644, p. 3.

(28) J. A. Comenius, *A Reformation of Schooles*, 1642.

"Not only do the learned seldom excell those who are illiterate in the study of virtue . . . but also in the dexterous businesses they are for the most part excelled by them. For the most part the deepest Philosophers and Divines, though they seem as Eagles to themselves, with their abstracted speculations, yet are they as blind as Moles in matters of this life of human society."

(29) Milton, *Of Education*, p. 2.

(30) J. Comenius, *A Reformation of Schooles*, *ut sup.*

(31) W. Petty, *Advice to S. Hartlib for the Advancement of Some Particular Parts of Learning* 1648, Harl. Misc., vi, 1 seq.

(32) J. Comenius, *A Reformation of Schooles*, *ut sup.*

(33) W. Petty, *op. cit.*

(34) *A Pattern of Universal Knowledge*, 1651, E. 1304 (1).

(35) J. Comenius, *A Reformation of Schooles*, *ut sup.*

(36) J. Comenius, *A Dilucidation Answering Certain Objections*, or Part II of *A Reformation of Schooles*, 1642.

(37) W. Petty, *op. cit.*

(38) Addit. MSS. 32093, f. 399. It was also proposed that: "into this Colledge shall be received and there maintained poore Protestant Ministers and Schollars, being forraigners and Strangers borne, who shall reside in the said Colledge and apply themselves principally to the study of divinity."

(39) See J. W. Adamson, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

(40) W. Petty, *op. cit.*

(41) J. Dury, *op. cit.*

(42) *Chaos*, 1659, E. 988 (22).

(43) S. Harmar, *op. cit.*

(44) For an account of Hartlib, Comenius, and John Dury, see D. Masson, *Life of Milton*, *passim*.

(45) Perfect Diurnall, 26th March, 1649. Quoted by Foster Watson, in *Eng. Hist. Review*, xv, *ut sup.*

(46) The Moderate Intelligencer, 5-12th Feb., 1646. Burney Coll. 23a.

(47) *A Good Motion*, 1646, 669, f. 10 (108).

(48) *Original Letters to Cromwell*, *ut sup.*, p. 129.

(49) *To all Fathers of Noble Families and Lovers of Virtue*, 1649, 669, f. 14 (88).

(50) Severall Proceedings in Parliament, 14-21st Dec., 1649, Burney Coll., 33a.

(51) J. Dury, *op. cit.*

(52) W. Petty, *op. cit.*

(53) S. Harmar, *op. cit.*

- (54) *C.J.*, ii, 317.
 (55) D. Masson, *op. cit.*, iii, 224.
 (56) *C.J.*, iv, 588.
 (57) *Ibid.*, v, 131.
 (58) *Ibid.*, vii, 287.
 (59) Firth and Rait, i, 925.
 (60) *Ibid.*, ii, 968.
 (61) *Ibid.*
 (62) *Eg. Cal. of S.P.D.*, 1655-6, p. 136
 (63) *C.J.*, ii, 176.
 (64) F. Watson, *op. cit.*, p. 61.
 (65) Firth and Rait, ii, 342.
 (66) T. Richards, *History of the Puritan Movement in Wales*, 1920, p. 224.
 (67) *Cal. of S.P.D.*, 1658-9, p. 4.
 (68) *Cal. of S.P.D.*, 1655-6, p. 387. The trustees for ministers were appointed by ordinances of 1649 and 1650. Firth and Rait, ii, 142, 369.
 (69) *Cal. of S.P.D.*, 1657-8, p. 108.
 (70) *Ibid.*, p. 109.
 (71) *Ibid.*, p. 112.
 (72) *Cal. of S.P.D.*, 1655-6, p. 239.
 (73) J. Dury, *op. cit.*
 (74) Rushworth, *Historical Collection*, II, iv, 854.
 (75) *C.J.*, vi, 410.
 (76) O. Cromwell, *Letters and Speeches*, ed. E. S. C. Lomas, 1904, ii, 186.
 (77) *C.J.*, vi, 589.
 (78) W. Hutchinson, *History and Antiquities of the County Palatine, Newcastle*, 1785, i, 515-16.
 (79) *Ibid.*, i, 516-17.
 (80) *Cal. of S.P.D.*, 1655-6, p. 140.
 (81) *Ibid.*, p. 156.
 (82) *Ibid.*, p. 218.
 (83) *Ibid.*, p. 262.
 (84) W. Hutchinson, *op. cit.*, i, 518 seq.
 (85) *Ibid.*, i, 529.
 (86) *Ibid.*, i, 530.
 (87) *Cal. of S.P.D.*, 1656-7, pp. 304-5.
 (88) *Cal. of S.P.D.*, 1657-8, p. 77.
 (89) No attempt has been made in the following pages to give an account of the state of the law or its administration. All that has been attempted is an indication of contemporary opinion and policy on the subject, particularly in its social bearings.
 (90) E. Ludlow, *Memoirs*, ed. C. H. Firth, Oxford, 1894, i, 246.
 (91) G. Fox, *The Law of God*, 1658, E. 925 (2). See also on this subject W. Pryor, *A Plea for the Poor and Helpless*, 1659, E. 1010 (23).
 (92) *The Representative of Divers Well-Affected Persons with Regard to the Present Laws and Government*, 1649, E. 541 (16).
 (93) *The Corruption of the Laws of England*, 1649, Harl. Misc., iii, 250 seq.
 (94) W. Cole, *A Rod for the Lawyers*, 1650, Harl. Misc., iv, 319 seq.
 (95) *Certain Queries for the Publike Good*, 1647, E. 394 (8).
 (96) *An Appeal from Chancery to the Lord General*, 1653, E. 697 (21).
 (97) *Every Man's Right*, 1646, E. 340 (2).
 (98) *A Brief Dialogue between Creditor and Prisoner*, 1653, E. 713 (5).
 (99) *The Prisoners' Observation by Way of Complaint*, 1645, 669, f. 10 (17).
 (100) *Every Man's Right*, *ut sup.* "It seemeth a Riddle . . . to many thousands in the Kingdome being for the Liberty of the subject, the Peers of the Realme constantly enjoying the same, and yet the commonalty most unjustly debarred of the same, and still inslaved unto the arbitrary will and power of a few mercinarie Lawyers."
 (101) *The Women's Petition to Cromwell*, 1653, 661, f. 16 (30).
 (102) T. Grantham, *A Motion against Imprisonment for Debt*, 1643, E. 151 (4).

(103) *The Humble Remonstrance and Complaint of Many Thousands of Distressed Poor Prisoners*, 1643, E. 88 (8).

(104) *A Declaration of all the Freeborn People of this Kingdom*, 1645, 669, f. 10 (40).

(105) Severall Proceedings in Parliament, 30th Nov. to 7th Dec., 1649, Burney Coll., 33a.

(106) *Original Letters to Cromwell*, *ut sup.*, p. 147.

(107) S. Chidley, *A Cry against a Crying Sin*, etc., Harl. Misc., viii, 477 seq. Chidley made repeated attempts to force his views upon the attention of the authorities. The judges, President Bradshaw, and the Council of State and the House of Commons were all besieged in turn without apparent result. R. L. Hine, *op. cit.*, p. 212 seq.

(108) *The Representative of Divers Well-Affected Persons in and about the City of London*, *ut sup.*

(109) *Original Letters to Cromwell*, *ut sup.*, p. 99 seq.

(110) S. Chidley, *op. cit.*

(111) W. Pryor, *op. cit.*

(112) *Every Man's Case*, 1646, 669, f. 10 (12).

(113) *Original Letters to Cromwell*, *ut sup.*, p. 99.

(114) S. Chidley, *op. cit.*, p. 482.

(115) *C.J.*, iv, 701.

(116) *Ibid.*, vi, 318.

(117) Whitelocke, *Memorials*, iii, 260-73.

(118) Firth and Rait, ii, 455.

(119) *C.J.*, vii, 26.

(120) *Ibid.*, vii, 58.

(121) *Ibid.*, vii, 110.

(122) Whitelocke, *Memorials*, iii, 408-9.

(123) *C.J.*, vii, 249.

(124) *Ibid.*, vii, 250.

The measures reported by Whitelocke seem to be identical with some of those drawn up by the Barebones Parliament. See Somers, *Tracts*, vi. If this is the case, the incredibly short time in which the Barebones Parliament is supposed to have drawn up its measures of law reform would be explained. It is possible that in deciding to draw up a "new body of law" it was also taking over its predecessor's ideas.

(125) J. Somers, *Tracts*, vi, 277 seq.

(126) Somers, *op. cit.*, vi, 186, 189, 179, 188, 187.

(127) *Ibid.*, vi, 212.

(128) Firth and Rait, ii, 713.

(129) *Ibid.*, ii, 715.

(130) *Ibid.*, ii, 917.

(131) His identity cannot be traced.

(132) J. Somers, *op. cit.*, vi, 275-6.

(133) Firth and Rait, ii, 949.

(134) Somers, *op. cit.*, vi, 234 seq.

(135) *C.J.*, ii, 277.

(136) Firth and Rait, ii, 240.

(137) *Ibid.*, ii, 321.

(138) *Ibid.*, ii, 378.

(139) *C.J.*, vii, 303.

(140) Somers, *op. cit.*, vi, 221.

(141) Firth and Rait, ii, 753.

(142) *Ibid.*, ii, 888.

(143) *Ibid.*, ii, 911.

(144) *Newgate's Remonstrance to Cromwell*, 1653, E. 694 (9).

(145) *The Petition of Debtors in London*, 1654, 669, f. 19 (18). And see *Petition of Prisoners in Upper Bench Prison*, 1654, 669, f. 19 (24).

(146) *Petition of Poor Prisoners*, 1654, 669, f. 19 (14).

(147) *Ibid.*

(148) W. Holdsworth, *History of English Law*, vi, 429.

NOTES TO "CONCLUSION".

- (1) Cf. S. R. Gardiner, *Introd. to Constitutional Documents, ut sup.*, p. lxiv.
- (2) R. Steele, *The Tradesman's Calling*, 1684.
- (3) Bunyan, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, quoted by R. H. Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, p. 240.
- (4) D. Defoe, *The Complete English Tradesman*, Oxford, 1841, p. 33.
- (5) W. Ashley, *Economic Organization*, 1925, p. 158 *seq.*
- (6) T. S. Ashton, *Iron and Steel in the Industrial Revolution*, 1924, p. 211 *seq.*
- (7) A. P. Wadsworth, "History of the Rochdale Woollen Trade," *Transactions of Rochdale Literary and Scientific Society*, xv, 1925.
- (8) J. Bellers, *A College of Industry*, 1696.
- (9) R. Owen, *A New View of Society*, quoted by Gooch, *op. cit.*, p. 304.
- (10) See *Select Documents of English Economic History*, ed. Bland, Brown and Tawney, 1919, p. 619.
- (11) Parker in his *Introduction to Ecclesiastical Polity*, 1690, complained of the: "apes of wit and pedants of gentility that would make atheism the fashion."
- (12) H. F. Russell Smith, *The Theory of Religious Liberty in the Reigns of Charles II and James II*, Cambridge, 1911, p. 9.
- (13) Quoted H. F. Russell Smith, *Religious Liberty, etc.*, p. 66.
- (14) S. Fortrey, *England's Interest and Improvement*, 1663.
- (15) J. L. Hammond, *The Village Labourer*, 1924, Chapter II, *passim*.
- (16) Quoted by A. H. Johnson, *op. cit.*, p. 109.
- (17) See G. P. Gooch, *op. cit.*, App. B, p. 308 *seq.*
- (18) J. W. Adamson, *op. cit.*, p. 205 *seq.*
- (19) For the extreme modernity of Comenius's ideas, see *ibid.*, p. 79.
- (20) R. H. Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism, ut sup.*, p. 268.
- (21) D. Defoe, *Giving Alms no Charity, ut sup.* It is interesting to notice that this pamphlet was reprinted in 1893 by the Charity Organization Society.
- (22) On this point, see the quotations in E. S. Furniss, *op. cit.*, pp. 117-18.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

EXTRACTS RELATING TO THE LAND PROBLEM

(I) To The Right Honourable the Councill of State. The humble petition of the Tennants and Inhabitants of Hambledon in the County of Rutland. . . .

Humbly shewe :

That your peticoners having a longe tyme been Tennants for one and twenty yeares and other tearmes of the Mannor of Hambledon in Rutland shire, parcell of the possessions of the Duke of Buckingham under severall yearely rents : one Thomas Waite of Markett Overton in the said County Esqr. (a member of the late Parliament) did aboute a yeere and halfe since purchase the said Mannor of the Trustees or Committees of the Common Wealth for Sale of Delinquents' estates, pretending himselfe to bee Tennante in possession thereof by a Lease for six yeares as he pretends taken from the Committee of Sequestrations : but to enable himselfe to have the tennante right by the acte given to the Tennants to purchase the same, he promised your peticioners and the rest of the Tennants of the said Mannor, if they would consente he should purchase the mannor from the State's Trustees, that he would, after such purchase, make them new Leases of their former farmes which each held, for one and twenty yeares or three lives under their severall former Rents, or such as he should purchase it att ; and that he would not diminish or take away any parte of their Lands or farmes from them ; and that each of them should alsoe enjoy their former Cowe pastures (though it were parte of the Demeasnes of the Mannor) and that he would never enclose any parte of their farmes or other Landes of the said Mannor not before enclosed without your petitioners' free consents : And upon these promises and his menaces that he would not Leave them either house or Lands in the Towne, if they would not Consent to his purchase of it and would have it whether they would or noe, gott the peticoners to consente and subscribe their hands thereunto : and thereupon your peticioners relyeing upon the performance of his promises, permitted him to purchase it without any their opposition, att the value of the old rent and seaventy two pounds, three shillings nine pence improvement though the Lordshippe containe two thousand two hundred ffortye fflower acres of Land or neere thereabouts, soe that he might performe his agreements with your peticoners and yett have a profitable bargain : That since his purchase perfected, contrary to his engagement to your peticoners, he hath divided the said ffarmes and Common grounds into severall parcells ; takeing out of every yard Land tenn acres of the best to himselfe, and alsoe their Cowe pastures ; and enforced your peticioners to enclose the rest of their farmes, or else told them he would doe it : And alsoe refused to graunte them new

Leases for one and twenty yeares unlesse they would nere double their Rents for the residue of their farmes, and take it alsoe upon unreasonable Condicions ; and hath soe cast out and enclosed the premisses as that all the Spring and pott water are inclosed, and your peticoners in the higher parte of the towne have not water for their use, And hath turned and alsoe enclosed the brooke runninge through the Mannor, whereby they want water for their Cattle and other necessaries, without trespassing upon the inclosures : and though your peticoners plowed and sowed parte of the Lands with Corne by his consent yet he hath this yeare without their Consents made ditches and hedges crosse diverse and through other partes of their Corne and denyes them to reape their Corne soe sowed without payinge ten shillings an achre for it.

That by these inclosures and proceedings of his, your peticoners and the rest of the Tennants ; being aboute eighty families, shall be all undone, and the tyllage of Corne in the sayd Mannor decayed, and thirtie families of Labourers be destroyed for wante of worke, if the inclosures be continued without Tillage, and the whole parish speedily be depopulated or impoverished, he having often declared that he will pull downe or suffer to decay most of the houses when by death of Tennants or otherwise he getts possession of them."

State Papers Domestic, Interregnum, xlii, f. 227, c. 1653.

(II) A Letter from Major General Whalley. Nottingham, 9th April, 1656.

"I have sent you inclosed the presentment of the grand jury in Leicestersheire, with my margent notes. There is the same considerations in all the counties under my charge. Little is added, save that of enclosures, with which the grand jury in Warwickshire agrees. I beleve the rest of the counties, especially in Nottinghamshaire and Lincolnshaire would have done the like, had they thought of it. I assure you, though I mynded them of other thinges, I mentioned not that. Their owne sensiblenes of the common grievance and oppression put them upon it. As to the petitions of divers in Leicestersheire, that were referred to mee and to my orders, I sent for all partyes concerned, and hope have made such a composure as gives satisfaction to all ; at least they seeme to be pleased. Upon the referring themselves to mee, I ordered two parts of three of their arable land should for ever be kept in tillage ; the minister's liveing not lesse ; the poor amply provided for ; and upon these termes I hope God will not be provoaked, the poor not wronged, depopulation prevented, and the state not dampnified. For the performance of this agreement they are to give bond to his highnes and his successors in larg summes which I have ordered to be taken in my absence."

Thurloe, *State Papers*, iv, 686.

APPENDIX B

EXTRACTS RELATING TO INDUSTRIAL POLICY

(I)

Sept. 22, 1651. At the Councell for Trade at White Hall.

This Councell having received sundry other petitions complaining . . . of many abuses and deceipts, Namely in the heavy and corrupt

dying of Silke, and adding therby in the weight thereof a 3rd or 4th part : In the mixing of Copper with Gold and Silver thread : In the selling of Gold and Silver Lace and thread by an uncertain weight ; and not that which all Bullion and plate is usually bought and sold by : Likewise in mixinge Silke with Thread in Ribands, points and other Commodities.

With the like frauds and adulteracions in Upholstry Wares, in ye dressinge, dying, weaving and making up of Cloth Bayes, and most other Manufactures and handicraft Trades ; to the great detriment and Cozinage of the Commonwealth : Some of them as hath beene alledged happening for want of their being Incorporated ; others for want of sufficient power in their respective Corporacions, to search and punish the abuses knowne to them ; or to lay such a small and moderate asseesse upon their Members or upon the severall Commodities, as shall defray the Charge of the said search : Others through the taking in Men of severall Trades under one Company, through the undue choice of their officers out of those men ; proving oftymes unskilfull and negligent in the managing of the affairs of their Government : Others through the want of restrayning ill and bad wares appertayning to their severall Arts to be brought from beyond Sea to their great discouragement, and to the prejudice oftymes of the Nation.

Lastly, Some by other Corporacions intrrenching upon or thrusting into their priviledges.

All which in former times had usually an Applicacion and Redresse by the late King's Councell Table, or were referred to the Lord Keeper, Lord Treasurer, Lord privy Seale, to the president of the King's Councell, the Attorney Generall, Cheife Justices or to Justices of the peace in the County, or to some two or more of any of these at the King's pleasure, to heare and to determine or to doe therein as should seeme good to them upon the Grounds of the Lawes of this Nation. Forasmuch therefore as very many Thousands of the good people of this Nation are greatly concerned in Cases of this Nature ; and that the Differences and Complaints have beene already very numerous.

The Councell for these Reasons
doe offer it as their humble opinion

That it will bee very Commodious and advantageous to Trade and will much conduce to the ease and benefitt of the people and Nation in generall.

If some way for the viewing, Confirming, or rectifying of the By Lawes, and Ordinances constituted, and now in use by the severall Societies of Merchants and Manufacturers ; And for the hearinge, examining and determining of all the Cases abovesaid in the severall Handycraft Trades, and others, and for the dispatch of the same, be settled and authorized by Parliament ; and to such persons, or in such Manner intrusted as to the wisdom of the Parliament shall be thought fitt.

S.P.D., Interregnum, xvi, f. 84 seq.

(II)

Reasons that have at severall times beene offered to urge the informing and settling of our Inland Trade and Manufactures, under some certaine way of Superspection and Regulacion.

It hath been represented.

1st. That the Trade and Manufactures of this Nation will unavoidably be hazarded otherwise to be lost and our people thereby to be more and more reduced in to want and poverty : For if some men be without punishment permitted to make bad, ill and unmerchandise wares ; They by reason of this deceit will be able to sell off their Commodities cheaper, and so, for a long time, faster, then all those other men, who make constantly good ; which honester sort of persons being by this means deprived of their livelyhoods and Trade ; It proves, in the end, a Temptation to them also to take up the like false making and deceit ; whereby (besides the abuse and Cozination used here one to another which seems fitt to be redressed).

The Generality also of what Commodities are exported beyond Sea comes at length to be all bad, as we have already had experience in every particular Manufacture we have yett had ; which badness being once discovered by other Nations, causeth the disrepute of our Commodities abroad ; and that they become of no certaine value to us ; having no longer a vent with them, then either Necessity compells them, or other places forebare to make them.

It hath beene represented.

2dly. That the greife and Complaints of all the meaner sort of people cannot, without a Reforming and Regulating our Inland Trade, possibly be eased ; For as $\frac{3}{4}$ parts of this Nation do depend immediately upon the Manufactures of it of one Kind or another : so the Complaints of the people, answerably is for the most part grounded upon the deadness and want of Employment and Trade ; Which want of Trade notwithstanding (as it hath beene probably alledged) hath chiefly proceeded through our Neglect and want of Care in the making of our Manufactures to their due Goodnesse ; of which an Instance or two hath beene given That whereas in one port of Spaine alone wee used within these few yeares to vent about 12000 peices of Sayes, Serges, and the like woollen stufes ; we now scarce vent 2000 ; and so ratably in other parts ; the Dutch having taken up a way of truer making them. Whereas also, formerly, we sent into all places great store of varnix draftworke, and the like workes : It is now, through the badnesse and falsenesse of it, become totally disused and lost. Which also may be said of severall other Commodities, as well that of our Cloth as others ; That through a want of law and Inspeccion of their Goodnesse and truenesse, some drift into a disrepute ; and so into an abatement of their value and price ; and are at length refused to be bought at all, when either another Commodity may serve instead ; or men of other Countries make it honester than we ; The mischief being not without a law and Reformation to be prevented ; and so whole Trades and multitudes of men depending upon them, come at once to be ruined and beggered and our stocke to be more and more lessened.

The wealth or maine Stocke of the Nation having been ever rated according to the Quantity of Manufacture made in it and exported.

It hath beene represented.

3rdly. That without Reforming our Inland Trade in some constant way of Regulacion ; It is impossible to regulate or settle a forraigne Trade, or to exact the performance of such Articles as shall be agreed with other Nations for the encouragement of our Commerce : It being presumed other Nations cannot be obliged to entertaine our people or a Trafficke with them ; if wee will take a Liberty to Cozen them

with our Commodities. Nor can we expect a Currency of price in other Countries for our Manufactures ; if they be not of any certaine and Current goodnesse.

All which is nevertheless humbly submitted.

S.P.D., Interregnum, xvi, f. 387, December, 1651.

(III)

THE PETITION OF MANUEL DORMIDO TO CROMWELL

“ . . . The supreame and moste high god having endowed your highnesse with such a Vallerous minde, cleere Understanding, consummate talent and heroyke Vallour, wherewith Admirably your highnese doth protecte and governe this moste noble Coñmonwealth of england, wherein secretly is disserned that your highnese is favoured with his divine asistance, being Likewise feered and Respected of other nations who seekes with new aliances the Peace and quietenesse of their Countries by speciall ayde of god whom with a particular providence hath mercifully dominion over this moste noble Coñmonwealth, Lett therefore in it that true and Unfalliable States Pollicie bee admitted, opening the gates to my nation to the ende they may (Under the Divine protection and that of your highnese) freely Use their exercise in the observance of ye moste holly Lawes given by god on mounte Sinay, graunting them Libertie to come with their familiees and estates to bee dwellers heere with the same eaquallnese and conveniences which ye inland borne subjects doe injoy, Wherewith busines will increase and ye Coñmerce will become more oppulent, with ye continuall navegations by seazes to ye confines of the nearest and farthiste Countries, prospering those allrady Conquered making their habitations more eazy, and atchiving others of more importance, and of greater Benefits, and thereby increasing the Revenues of Custumes and excize, and all such officers and people who by their Labour doe seeke their advancements will have continuall opportunities to attaine and gett Unto it, by many Employments and negociacions of their manufactures. . . . And in summe it will become ye Richest, moste poppulous and oppulent monarky in ye whole world.”

Egerton MSS. 1049, f. 7.

APPENDIX C

EXTRACTS RELATING TO THE DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT IN THE GILDS

(1) The Petition of the Freemen of the Goldsmiths' Company to the Parliamentary Committee for the Trial of Petitions.

“ Sheweth that by their Charter those of the Mistery of Goldsmiths are incorporated and made a Commonalty, and that the said Commonalty by the said Charter have power to chuse fower Wardens yearly of the men of the Commonalty aforesaid, to oversee, rule and duely governe the said Mistery and Commonalty aforesaid, and all and singular the men of the same.” [But for over forty years past the Wardens and Assistants have chosen all the officers.]

“ By reason whereof their priviledges are infringed ; the common good of the said Company hath thereby bene much neglected, the revenues thereof not manadged to the best advantage of the said

Company ; and much of the rentes belonging to the said Company is disposed of for sixty and ninety-nine years upon great fines, without the privy or consent of the said Commonalty, under pretence of paying the debtes of the said Company, although the Commonalty doe owe yet understand the state of the accomptes of the said Companye."

Goldsmiths' Court Book, vol. 1651-4, f. 118.

(II) The Answer of the Clothworkers' Court to the Yeomanry.

"That wee have a Master and Wardens duly elected and sworne in their severall places accordinge to the ordinances of this Company, and that wee cannott nor will not give way to any such elecon as they desire. And that wee knowe our ordinances are legally made and confirmed. Yett to shew how willinge this Court is to settle peace in the Company, this Court is contented to suspend the execution of such of the said Ordinances as upon good grounds shall be thought fitt to be by the Lord Maior and Court of Aldermen of the Cittie Councell, untill tyme permitt to have other Ordinances confirmed accordinge to lawe . . ."

Clothworkers' Court Book, vol. 1639-49, f. 187b.

(III) The Opinion of the Yeomanry Officials of the Merchant Taylors on the Request of the Working Taylors for the Appointment of a Subcommittee.

"This Court after much debate thereof with the Complainants working Taylors, doth declare That they themselves, the members of this Court are and anciently have been the Subcommittee to this Company, and that this Court hath beene and still is ready to performe their duty. . . . That to admitt of another subcommittee constituted of such men as they themselves, the petitioners, shall name is altogether inconvenient and inconsistent with the auncient and good government of this Company, and tending to such an innovacon as may prove of dangerous consequence to this Society in time to come. The Company having bene so well and laudably governed for so many ages past under the present established government . . ."

The Decision of the Court of Assistants on this Report.

"After long debate, This Court doe think fitt that for the time to come there shal be two Cutting Taylors yearly chosen as Wardens Substitutes, if such may be had of men of ability to undergoe the same. And this Court doth propounde to add Ten Cutting Taylors to joyne with the Wardens Substitutes and Sixteene men as a Subcommittee during the pleasure of the Courte to meete . . . for regulating the trade of Taylory and the abuses therein, and to direct the Informers and take accompt of their businesses."

The Opinion of the Cutting Taylors on this Decision.

"But the petitioners being called in and acquainted therewith, peremptorily insisted upon it to have the sole nominacon of the persons to be the Subcommittee, denying to agree to any Committee nominated by this Court. Notwithstanding, this Court conceived it noe waies expedient or necessary but contrarywise to bee of very ill consequence to give them any such power."

Merchant Taylors Court Book, vol. 1636-54, f. 331b.

APPENDIX D

EXTRACTS RELATING TO THE DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT IN THE CITY GOVERNMENT

(I) A Meeting of the Common Council of the City held on 13th January, 1649.

"Wee then desireinge the Lord Mayor that the Acts of the last Courte might be reade accordinge to the usuall course of the said Courte, and for the further confirmacon of the said Acts, could not obteyne the same . . . for above an Howre's space. After which some members of the said Courte . . . tendred a petition thereunto to bee reade. . . . And though it was often and earnestly prest for a Long time by the major parte of the Courte that it mighte be reade . . . yett the Lord Maior wholly refused to suffer the same, or that the question should be putt whether it should be reade, yea or noe. After the fruitless expence of many howres, another question beinge drawne upp, the major parte of the Courte required itt to be putt, . . . to be decided according to the right and Custome of the Court, and beinge denied therein declared how unjust and of what a destructive nature to the beinge of the Courte such a denyall would bee, yet notwithstandinge, the Lord Maior with the two Aldermen departed and lefte the courte sittinge to the greate greife and generall dissatisfaccon of the same. Beinge thus deprived of our ordinary assistance for our proceedings, we did then require and command the Common Serjeant and Towne Clarke, officers of the said Courte, to stay in the Courte and putt the question, both which they contemptuously refused, and lefte the Courte sitting likewise. Whereupon, in discharge of our trust and in our tender care of the common good of Citty and Kingdome, Wee did stay and remaine a courte, wherein was thrice reade, debated, and voted (nemine contradicente) the petition hereunto annexed to be . . . presented to this honourable Howse."

Journals of the Common Council of the City, J. 40, f. 314.

(II) The Main Terms of the Act of 28th February, 1649.

"That in all times to come, the Lord Maior of the said citty of London doe often, and att such time as any tenn or more of the Common Councell men doe by wrytinge under their hands request or desire him thereunto . . . summon and assemble and hold a Common Councell. And if at any tyme being soe requested or desired, hee shall faile therein then the tenn persons or more makeinge such request or desire shall have power and are hereby authorised by wrytinge under their hands to summon or cause to be summoned to the said Councell the Members belonginge thereunto, in as ample manner as the Lord Maior himselfe usually heretofore hath done. And that the Members appearinge upon the said summons, beinge of the number of ffowerty or more, shall become a Common Councell."

"And that in every vote which shall passe and in the other proceedings of the said Councell, neither the Lord Maior nor the Aldermen, joynte or separate, shall have any negative or distincte voice or vote, otherwise than with and amonge and as parte of the rest of the members of the said Councell."

"And that the absence or withdrawinge of the Lord Maior or Aldermen from the said Councell shall not stopp or prejudice the proceedings

of the said Councill. And that every Common Councill which shall be held . . . shall sitt and continue soe longe as the Major parte of the saide Courte shall thinke fitt and shall not be dissolved or adjourned but by and accordinge to the order and consent of the major parte of the same Councill."

"And that all Acts, Records and Register Bookes belonginge to the said Citty shall be extant to be perused and searched into by every cittizen of the said Citty."

HEN. SCOBELL.

Journals of the Common Council of the City, J. 40, f. 312.

APPENDIX E

“ A REPORT OF THE COSTS AND CHARGES OF THE FOUR GREAT HOSPITALS ”

Christ's.	Bartholomew's.	Thomas's.	Bridewell.
1641. Kept . . . 926 Apprenticed, dis- charged and dead 103	1641. Cured . 1,002 Buried . 192 Remaining . 330	1641. Cured . 1,008 Buried . 212 Remaining . 309	1641. Brought . 711 Kept . 170
1644. Kept . . . 758 Apprenticed, etc. . 100	1644. Cured . 1,122 Buried . 152 Remaining . 249	1644. Cured . 1,063 Buried . 248 Remaining . 265	1644. Brought . 1,128 Kept . 134
1645. Kept . . . 630 Apprenticed, etc. . 133	1645. Cured . 796 Buried . 116 Remaining . 246	1645. Cured . 825 Buried . 121 Remaining . 226	1645. Brought . 793 Kept . 148
1647. Kept . . . 597 Apprenticed, etc. . 84	1647. Cured . 901 Buried . 180 Remaining . 268	1647. Cured . 682 Buried . 69 Remaining . 215	1647. Brought . 575 Kept . 198
1648. Kept . . . 735 Apprenticed, etc. . 64	1648. Cured . 831 Buried . 170 Remaining . 300	1648. Cured . 961 Buried . 153 Remaining . 246	1648. Brought . 545 Kept . 197
1649 Kept . . . 838 Apprenticed, etc. . 64	1649 Cured . 985 Buried . 162 Remaining . 301	1649. Cured . 780 Buried . 118 Remaining . 223	1649. Brought . 521 Kept . 188
1650. Kept . . . 749 Apprenticed, etc. . 88	1650. Cured . 1,083 Buried . 184 Remaining . 292	1650. Cured . 923 Buried . 118 Remaining . 244	1650. Brought . 725 Kept . 193
1653 Kept . . . 674 Apprenticed, etc. . 70 Remaining . 604 Lately admitted . 200	1653. Cured . 1,096 Buried . 168 Remaining . 322	1653. Cured . 985 Buried . 152 Remaining . 262	1653. Brought . 705 Kept . 177
1655. Kept . . . 948 Apprenticed and Dis- charged . 68 Buried . . 16	1655. Cured . 1,154 Buried . 211 Remaining . 361	1655. Cured . 1,052 Buried . 154 Remaining . 249	1655. Brought . 688 Kept . 130

For the Thomason Tracts used in this table, see Bibliography, p. 405.

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These Tracts, which according to Mr. G. K. Fortescue's estimate number about 22,255, constitute a unique and valuable source of information for the period. They deal with every variety of subject, political, religious, economic,

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C.J.	.	.	.	Commons' Journals.
L.J.	.	.	.	Lords' Journals.
S.P.D.	.	.	.	State Papers Domestic.
Journal	.	.	.	Journals of the Common Council of the City.
Rep.	.	.	.	Repertories of the Court of Aldermen.
Burney Coll.	.	.	.	Burney Collection of Newspapers.
Harl. Misc.	.	.	.	Harleian Miscellany.
P.R.O.	.	.	.	Public Record Office.
Hist. MSS. Comm.	.	.	.	Historical Manuscripts Commission.
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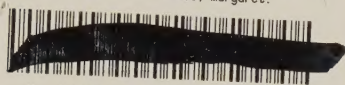
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